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Lisieux, the little
flower of Jesus.

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Therese, Saint
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Lisieux, the little
flower of Jesus.

SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

O God, who didst inflame with Thy Spirit of Love the soul of Thy Servant, St. Thérèse, grant that we also may love Thee and make Thee much loved.

(100 days. Cardinal Bourne.)

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED IN THE FIRST PLACE TO SAINT THÉRÈSE, THE LITTLE WHITE FLOWER OF JESUS, IN HEARTFELT THANKSGIVING FOR MANY FAVOURS, ESPECIALLY HER LOVING SOLICITUDE FOR THE GROTTO AT CARFIN; AND SECONDLY TO HER "PETITE MÈRE," MOTHER AGNES OF JESUS, IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF INNUMERABLE KINDNESSES EXTENDING OVER A PERIOD OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

AN INDULGENCE of Two Hundred Days was graciously granted by His Eminence Cardinal Bourne, on the Nineteenth of March, Nineteen Hundred and Twelve, to Readers of the Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

THE PROFITS of this volume—price seven shillings and sixpence—will be entirely devoted to the purpose of making the Little Flower of Jesus more widely known, particularly in heathen lands, and of thus recruiting her "Legion of Little Victims of Divine Love."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY by itself, under the title of "A Little White Flower," may also be had from the Publishers, or from the Manager, Carfin Grotto Stall, Carfin, Motherwell, Scotland. Price, three shillings and sixpence; in paper covers, special propaganda edition, one shilling. The "*Letters of Saint Thérèse*"—carefully revised—are published at one shilling. All these volumes may likewise be obtained from Kenedy and Sons, New York; M. Goyer, 1382, rue St. Hubert, Montreal; or the Carmel, Lisieux, Calvados, France.

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London

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

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SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE DEFINITIVE CARMELITE EDITION OF HER AUTOBIOGRAPHY & LETTERS, TOGETHER WITH THE STORY OF HER CANONIZATION, AND AN ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL OF HER HEAVENLY ROSES: *By the* REV. THOMAS N. TAYLOR, *Carfin, Motherwell, Scotland:* WITNESS BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL OF THE BEATIFICATION

Senior Novitiate

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CONTENTS

PAGE

DEDICATION AND NOTES ii

PROLOGUE (*by the Editor*):

Part I. The Canonisation and After . . . 3

„ *II.* The Home of the Saint 16

„ *III.* The Story of the Book 23

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

Chapter I. Earliest Memories 29

„ *II.* A Catholic Household 42

„ *III.* Pauline Enters Carmel . . . 56

„ *IV.* First Communion 69

„ *V.* Vocation of Thérèse 86

„ *VI.* A Pilgrimage to Rome 103

„ *VII.* Carmel at Last 121

„ *VIII.* Profession of Sœur Thérèse . . 134

„ *IX.* The Night of the Soul . . . 150

„ *X.* The New Commandment . . . 162

„ *XI.* The Novice Mistress 173

„ *XII.* The Apostle of Prayer . . . 188

„ *XIII.* A Canticle of Love 196

EPILOGUE:

Part I. Martyrdom and Death of Saint Thérèse . 211

„ *II.* Process of Canonisation 243

III. The Papal Documents 256

COUNSELS AND REMINISCENCES OF SAINT THÉRÈSE 291

Contents

PAGE

LETTERS OF SAINT THÉRÈSE 331

To Céline 333

To Mother Agnes of Jesus (Pauline) . . 351

To Sister Mary of the S. Heart (Marie) . 357

To Sister Frances Teresa (Léonie) . . 362

To Her Cousin, Marie Guérin . . . 366

To Her Cousin, Jeanne Guérin . . . 368

To Her Brother Missionaries . . . 369

SELECTED POEMS OF SAINT THÉRÈSE . . . 377

My Song of To-day 379

Memories 379

I Thirst for Love 381

To Scatter Flowers 383

Why I Love Thee, Mary! 383

SHOWER OF ROSES 385

Poem 387

Roses—Chiefly European 389

HER CONQUEST OF AMERICA 425

PRAYERS 445

Prayers of Saint Thérèse 447

Novena Prayer 453

Mass Prayers 455

APPEAL 456

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux	*Frontispiece*	
Saint Thérèse with her Mother . .	*To face page*	16
Church of Saint Pierre . . .	„	„ 48
Saint Thérèse with her Father . .	„	„ 96
Saint Thérèse as a Novice . . .	„	„ 128
Saint Thérèse, Sacristan . . .	„	„ 144
The Carmel Quadrangle . . .	„	„ 160
The Tomb of Saint Thérèse . .	„	„ 256
"The Little Flower of Jesus" . .	„	„ 384
The Shower of Roses	„	„ 416

PROLOGUE
THE CANONISATION AND AFTER
THE HOME OF THE SAINT
THE STORY OF THE BOOK

PROLOGUE

PART I

THE CANONISATION AND AFTER

ON the morning of May 17, 1925, Blessed Thérèse, the humble Carmelite of Lisieux, was canonised by her devoted client, Pope Pius XI. The scene was one of such splendour and enthusiasm, that on the morrow His Holiness assured the pilgrims from her own fair land of France that it would not readily be forgotten in Rome, rich though the city was in glorious memories.

The new Saint had been known in her early childhood as Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin. When fifteen years old, she became Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus et de la Sainte Face. At the age of twenty-four she exchanged her cell in an obscure French convent for what seemed destined to become a nameless grave. But the Divine ways are not our ways. God would seem to have been conquered by her simplicity, her humility, and her passionate love, so that He lent to this lowly daughter of Our Lady of Mount Carmel the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. During the quarter of a century that has elapsed since her death, she has been a "doer of good" to all who sought her intercession, even as is St. Anthony of Padua. Like St. Teresa of Avila, she has been pre-eminently a friend of priests; like St. Margaret of Scotland, she has been a mother to the poor; while in her apostolate of Bethlehem and Calvary she resembles the great troubadour of Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi himself.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

The birds St. Francis loved had sung but two summers over his unknown grave when the Vicar of Christ set his name in the calendar of the Saints. Seven centuries have passed since he ushered in the golden age of the Faith, yet the singer of Assisi still holds sway and is assured of immortality in the hearts of men. Of the sweet singer of Lisieux the Cardinal of Westminster has said that she, too, marks a new epoch in the history of God's Church, and in God's method of dealing with souls. The infallible Shepherd in Rome has proclaimed her the living image of the Infant Christ, and has told his world-wide flock that God, in quite an exceptional way, enriched her with a knowledge of heavenly things, so that she was enabled to trace out for others a sure way of salvation. "That light enkindled a love by which she lived, and of which she died, having given nothing to God but love alone, and having resolved to save a multitude of souls that they might love God for eternity. Her rainfall of mystical roses is proof that she has begun her work, and it is our most keen desire that all the faithful should study St. Thérèse so as to copy her example. If men would but follow her counsels, how quickly would the nations be reformed!"

To the witness of an infallible teacher we may add the testimony of the Saint herself. Her reign that was to know no end, she prophesied, would begin when she rejoined the Bridegroom, Christ; and her eternity would be passed in scattering the roses of her sympathy upon this scentless and barren world. She would be Love itself in the heart of her Mother the Church. Can it be that she is to usher in a golden era of divine charity more fruitful in Saints than the age of Francis and Dominic, of Thomas Aquinas and Louis the Crusader?

Sunlight and shadow, calm and storm, these are the vicissitudes of the Church upon earth. Fifty years ago the gates of hell so far prevailed as to put chains once more on the hands of Peter. The heart of Pius IX was sad as he looked out from his prison upon the vast pagan

lands; as he looked towards Paris, Berlin, the Russian capital, or across the Piazza to his own beloved Rome. But the anxious eyes of the Pontiff were gladdened, as elsewhere he saw the fires enkindled by the sons of Patrick and Louis, slowly yet surely dispersing the shades of night. Northward, in truth, the dawn was breaking, and westward, over the Atlantic, the sun was mounting in the skies.

In the early days of 1873, she, whom another Pius has christened his "guiding star," appeared in Normandy of the apple orchards and exquisite Gothic fanes. She whom her brethren in the faith in England, Ireland and Scotland, in Canada, the United States, and under the Southern Cross, have named—borrowing her own endearing term—the "Little Flower of Jesus," first saw the light in Alençon, though it was in the old Roman town of Lisieux, reminiscent of St. John Eudes and St. Thomas of Canterbury, that she spent the greater portion of her brief life on earth. She came amongst us, and her advent, and still more her going twenty-four years later, and most of all her glorification—more speedy, all things considered, and more universal than the triumph of the Poverello of Assisi—coincided with a quick spreading of the dawn and a driving back of the powers of darkness. Was it merely a coincidence? Those who know her power, and they are legion, refuse to believe so.

To help the realisation of her wish to love God as never yet He had been loved, of her wish to teach simple souls the simple way of love she had found so easy, she foretold that she would return to earth to win hearts for her Beloved. The promise has been richly kept. From Great Britain to the Brazil that gifted her costly reliquary, from Uganda to the China of her heart, the influence of the new Troubadour of Jesus, the new Saint of Bethlehem, the new Apostle of the Crucified, is daily more and more felt. An American priest, who was present at the ceremony of May 17, assured the

writer that the "Little Queen" was enthroned in the hearts of the American people throughout the length and breadth of his land, even in the remotest haunts, and that the wild prairie fire was the only phenomenon to which one could compare her swift-winged victory.

Her conquests are drawn from all classes. Cloistered nuns love her—is it accidental that since her death the Carmels of Great Britain have multiplied almost tenfold? Missionaries in all lands turn to her who, herself, had so thirsted to be a missionary, and she repays their confidence with her sweetest roses. Children idolise her; while busy mothers and toiling men have recourse to her with a readiness that rivals their devotion to St. Joseph himself. Finally it is well known that the marvellous devotion of the soldiers to St. Thérèse, and, above all, the love she inspired among the English-speaking peoples, moved Benedict XV to hasten the official canonisation of one who was already canonised in the hearts of men.

She was beatified by his successor on April 29, 1923, being the first Servant of God whom Pius XI has raised to the Altars. Because of her world-wide popularity, and her extraordinary power, he deliberately chose her to be his first Saint, only two years after the ceremony of her beatification—"an event most rare," he reminded us, "in the annals of the Saints." It is most remarkable, too, that our Carmelite of Lisieux should be the first daughter of St. Teresa to receive the honour of canonisation. Someone has stated that the Apostle of Assisi had scattered what St. Benedict had gathered into his barns. May it not be said that the roses of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, which sweeten so many lives, are culled in part from the ancient and perfumed rose-gardens of the Carmels of the world?

The crowning triumph came on the feast of St. Paschal, like our Saint, the wonderful lover of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; and the radiant Roman sunshine was in harmony with the happiness that reigned

in the hearts of those privileged to be present at the ceremony. High overhead in the apse of St. Peter's, a picture of the Blessed Trinity was surrounded by the rays and clouds and angels of the famous "Gloria" of Bernini. Underneath was the bronze chair which covers the chair of St. Peter himself. Below this again was the throne of Pius XI. Myriad clusters of electric lamps made a veritable fairyland of the great Basilica, as the brilliant light fell on the thirty-three scarlet-robed Cardinals, on some two hundred prelates, on the gorgeous Papal Guards, and on the splendour of the Papal Court. Beyond prelates and guards were massed thousands upon thousands of eager faces revealing eager hearts. The preliminaries having been concluded, all immediately rose to their feet. Peter was to speak through the lips of Pius.

Seated and wearing the tiara on his brow, the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church replied to the urgent appeal of millions of his children, and the voice, echoed by wireless for the first time at a canonisation, resounded through the vast spaces of the Basilica of Michael Angelo.

"*For the honour of the Blessed Trinity and the exaltation of our Holy Catholic Faith; by the authority of Jesus Christ, of Peter and Paul, and by our own authority: after mature deliberation and frequent prayer and consultation with our Venerable Brethren; we declare the Blessed Thérèse of the Child Jesus to be a Saint of God's Church; and we inscribe her in the catalogue of the Saints on September 30, the day of her heavenly birth.*"

The Pontiff ended, in tones of marked emphasis, by the time-honoured words: "*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*" Instantly, and for the first time in the history of canonisations, there came a

thunderclap of applause. The trammels of the Process were definitely cast aside, and the queenly daughter of Carmel's Queen found upon earth the freedom and high honour that had long since been her portion in Paradise. It seemed as if the multitude could not contain its joy at the thought of the new life dawning for the apostle of the Child Jesus. Indeed, the message of the Holy Father recalled the music of the Bethlehem sky, and our souls exulted as we dreamed we heard again the heavenly anthem: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax!*" Simultaneously the silver trumpets sounded far away in the dome, and the great bells of the Basilica rang out in the morning air, their joyous notes echoed for the space of an hour by all the bells of Rome. Over mountains and seas ten million hearts caught up the echo and sang their gratitude to the Creator of St. Thérèse. And of all those canticles of praise none were more grateful than those of her three Carmelite sisters in a convent of Lisieux, and of one Visitandine in Caen; and of these again the most heartfelt was surely the thanksgiving of Mother Agnes of Jesus, her "little mother," for the glory given to "little Thérèse."

Shortly after the *Te Deum*, there began that scene of indescribable splendour, the Mass of a newly canonised Saint sung by the Vicar of Christ. To and fro through ranks of great prelates, noble guards, and knights in scarlet uniforms or flowing white mantles, the Holy Father passed and repassed from throne to altar and from altar to throne. Above the Papal altar stood the celebrated canopy of bronze, and high aloft towered the most marvellous dome in all the world. In the crypt underneath, the precious remains of St. Peter and St. Paul lay awaiting the hour of their resurrection.

From the princes of earth in the tribunes—Ireland's first Governor-General was there—and from the multitude from many lands in apse and nave—the Cardinals of Westminster and Philadelphia brought the homage of two nations—one's mind travelled to the cloud of un-

seen witnesses. She herself, Carmel's humblest child, was watching her Eucharistic Spouse as He gave thanks to His Father for the graces lavished on the "Little Flower of Jesus." She noted each pilgrim in the Basilica where less than forty summers before she had knelt, a simple child of fourteen years. She noted, likewise, each one of the countless throbbing hearts outside its walls uplifted to her on this her day of triumph. Her blessed parents, with their four angel children, together with her favourite martyr friends, Agnes and Cecilia of Rome, Joan and Théophane of France—all these were looking down. So, also, were her Spanish Saints, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross—it was their first coronation of a daughter in Christ, after three centuries and a half. So, too, were Our Lady of Carmel, and the Heavenly Father to whom St. Thérèse had refused nothing since the age of three.

After the Gospel of the Mass, Pope Pius preached on her whom he had already called a "miracle of virtues and a prodigy of miracles." It was a glowing tribute of praise. Scarcely had he finished, when in the presence of the vast audience there descended a token of thanks. The Saint had loved flowers passionately from childhood. They mirrored dimly her Divine Lover's beauty. In Carmel she loved chiefly the rose, queen of all flowers. She taught her novices to love it too, for was it not the emblem of divine charity, queen of all virtues? Plucking the rose-petals she would scatter them around her crucifix, images of the life she longed to sacrifice, every instant of it, for Christ her Beloved. On her death-bed she promised that she would spend her Heaven raining roses upon earth. How often since that prophecy has not their sweet odour betokened her mysterious presence to her clients! Indeed, one of the two Beatification miracles had been heralded by a shower of real roses—a great picture in St. Peter's reproducing the scene.

As the amplifiers ceased to echo the Pope's panegyric

of St. Thérèse and her "little way" to holiness, suddenly the roses came again. Five of those which decorated a cluster of lights in the apse detached themselves in some unknown way, then, describing a large curve in the air, they landed at the Pontiff's feet. A thrill passed through the great assemblage. The sign was as gracious as it was characteristic. The Rose Queen was rendering her thanks.

Soon after took place the presentation by the Cardinals of the traditional offerings—decorated candles, bread, wine, and in silvered or gilt cages, little birds symbolical of the aspirations of the Saint. One of the cages, with its two turtle-doves, found its way later to the Carmel of Lisieux. At the Communion the Holy Father shared at the throne the consecrated Host and Chalice with his cardinal deacon, using the golden tube for the Precious Blood.

The Mass ended with the Papal blessing and the stately procession re-formed. Four thousand were said to have taken part in it. The cheering burst forth again, and came in waves that eddied lovingly around the gigantic edifice until the retainers bore Pius XI on the lofty *sedia* back to the Vatican. The coronation was over, but the lights remained in order that the two hundred thousand who had failed to gain admission to the ceremony might still behold the splendour of the illuminated Basilica.

Although we had taken our places in St. Peter's at half-past six, and it was now almost two o'clock in the day, still we lingered on, unwilling to snatch ourselves away from the scene that seemed to foreshadow our unwearying vision of the "Little Queen" in the eternal courts of God.

In the evening the exterior of St. Peter's was adorned with the old-time candles, the mellow lambent light of which contrasted pleasantly with the glare of the electric cross on the obelisk outside. The church of Michael Angelo, the dome of Bramante, the façade and the

columns of Bernini, these were all converted into a giant rose of fire that for the first time since the fateful year of 1870 blossomed in the Roman sky. Traffic ceased in the Borgo, and the city with its countless palmers from all quarters of Christendom flocked to witness the sight.

On the following afternoon the pilgrims from France had their audience with the Pope. We were under the care of Mgr. Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux. A special reception was accorded to a group of friends of the Carmel, which included also a few marriage relatives of the "Little Flower," and several religious, *tourières*, from Lisieux and Caen, representatives of the convents where dwell the four surviving sisters of the Saint.

During the public audience the Holy Father addressed us in French. How warmly he congratulated Lisieux on the "deluge of glory" that had come upon it! How affectionately he spoke of his "dear little Saint"! How cordially he exhorted us to enter upon her "little way" of love and trust and self-surrender! The tears in his voice told of his passionate devotion, and one understood how, during that week, at an audience he granted to Cardinal Dougherty, he talked for over an hour of his "guiding star," and of the vast hopes he had built on the intercessory power of her "whom you in America," he added, "call the 'Little Flower of Jesus.'"

In the month of July the Carmel held its triduum of thanksgiving, and at the end of September the town of Lisieux itself celebrated the first festival of St. Thérèse. The streets were decorated with a wealth of loveliness, the result of weeks of labour. The artistry of the shields, crowns, arches, and other ornamental devices was worthy of the genius which gave to us the old churches of Normandy. Everywhere one saw her favourite flower. Trailing roses added beauty to the already beautiful cathedral of St. Pierre, to ancient St. Jacques, to St. Désir, and to the Benedictine Abbey of Notre Dame du Pré, where the "Little Flower" had made her First Communion.

More beautiful than all was the new chapel of the Carmel of St. Thérèse. Outside, an imperial diadem of roses surmounted a glorious baldachino. Inside, showers of delicate roses adorned the grille, while silken flags of many nations gave a rich note of colour to pillars and walls. On the left were the altars of the patrons of Carmel. On the right stood the twin altars of the Saint, dedicated to her respectively as patroness of missionaries, and as the friend of France and all English-speaking nations.[1] Beyond, through the grille, was the gorgeous shrine where beneath her recumbent marble effigy, in the casket that was the gift of Brazil, lie the precious relics of the "Little Queen." From the wall above, her miraculous Madonna smiles down. The stained glass tells the story of some of the promised roses that fell on missionaries, on soldiers, on the poor. One window makes Scottish hearts beat faster, for it depicts the conversion, in Edinburgh, of a former minister of the Free Church of Scotland, the Rev. Alexander Grant, who later died custodian of her birthplace in Alençon.

The clients of St. Thérèse forgathered from the ends of the earth. Among the princes of the Church were Bishops from Madagascar and India and Brazil. The Armenian Patriarch of Cilicia was there, and likewise Cardinal Bourne and Cardinal Dougherty, Cardinal Charost from Rennes, and Cardinal Vico, the Papal Legate from Rome. The services were carried out with magnificent liturgical pomp, and the music was as liturgical as it was singularly beautiful. From Paris came the Gregorian group of the *Schola Cantorum*, the singers of St. Gervais, the singers of the *Sainte Chapelle*, and the great organist of Notre Dame. The soul of the Saint must have exulted. The liturgy of Holy Church was ever a joy to her.

The celebrations ended on September 30, the anni-

[1] The cost of these two altars, and of their rich memorial chalices, was defrayed, as a special favour, out of the profits derived from the sale of *As Little Children*, *A Little White Flower*, and *Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*

versary of her passing to God. More than forty mitred Abbots and Bishops and Cardinals were drawn up in front of the shrine, while the Papal Legate placed in the hand of the Saint a golden rose, specially blessed for the occasion by Pope Pius XI. After Vespers the reliquary containing her blessed remains was borne in triumph through rose-garlanded streets to the public gardens under the shadow of the old Cathedral walls. In the glorious sunshine which we have now come to associate with the feasts of St. Thérèse, the flood of purple and scarlet and gold made an impressive sight. Suddenly, in honour of her who was to bring back to her own land, and across the Channel, and beyond the oceans the blessed light of faith, there burst from the many thousands of throats the great *Credo* of Dumont. Next came the touching ceremony of the blessing of the roses. A panegyric by Père Martin was followed by Benediction at an altar erected beneath a monumental triumphal arch. Then, as the procession left the old episcopal gardens, an aviator circling overhead showered roses on the moving mass below. The great day came to a close with the illumination of the town, on which had descended—to use the Papal phrase—"a whirlwind of glory." For the first time in their ancient history St. Pierre and St. Jacques were outlined in fire, and the new Carmelite "House of God" was set similarly aflame—symbol of the light and warmth the star of Pius was to bring to souls wandering in the dark valleys of the shadow of death.

It was not merely in that little town of Normandy that high festival was kept on the first feast-day of the Rose of Lisieux. The deluge of letters that reached Mother Agnes of Jesus during the subsequent days told how over the wide globe her "little Thérèse" had been glorified among men as never yet a newly canonised Saint. From Africa and Asia the happy tidings poured upon her, and she learned that the new continents had vied with the old in honouring her whom the King had

so delighted to honour. A world-wide army was marching under the orders of one who had pleaded with her Lord to be as a forgotten, trampled grain of sand.

Space lacks to tell the triumphs of September 30, 1925. It may be permitted to recount how in one corner of a remote land, once the ally of St. Joan of Arc, to-day the disciple of John Knox, the new Maid of France was shown high esteeem. After a public novena in the Grotto at Carfin, the feast was observed on the following Sunday, a delicious October day. Facing the now famous Madonna in her niche, there rises another great shrine which shelters an exquisite marble statue of the Saint of Lisieux, the gift of the pilgrims to Our Lady of Carfin. The day was thrice blessed. It was the first solemnisation of the feast of St. Thérèse, and actually the anniversary of her burial, when the seed was cast into the furrow that was to bring forth so golden a harvest. It was the feast of that kindred Saint, the Poverello of Assisi, great lover of God and of the many things that God has made—brothers and sisters all. It was Rosary Sunday, and therefore the anniversary of the day when—three short years before—Mary Immaculate, Queen of the Rosary, had taken possession of the shrine, built by Irish hands, which later was so widely advertised by St. Thérèse, at the prayer of her sisters in Lisieux.

In the morning there was a General Communion in the church, such as had never been witnessed in the history of the parish. Great showers of roses hung from the roof both of nave and sanctuary. Roses streamed from Venetian masts outside and inside the Grotto itself. The Little Flower shrine was smothered in roses of every hue. The village itself was adorned for the occasion, and her picture was proudly displayed outside well-nigh every door. In the afternoon her statue and a precious relic were borne in stately procession around the Grotto, escorted by the children she loved, by young maidens, by Tertiaries of St. Francis,

and a number of priests. About six hundred Children of Mary, some from as far away as Edinburgh, lined the triple path on the great flower-clad embankment in the middle of which, like a rich jewel in its setting, Our Lady's statue smiles down at Bernadette. Thousands upon thousands packed the Grotto and the vast terrace beyond. Over thirty thousand clients of the Saint had invaded the little mining village that day. The Rosary was said, and, as at Lisieux, the roses of St. Thérèse were blessed. With full hearts the crowd acclaimed their beloved Saint, and seven Benedictions in the church failed to suffice for the pilgrims.

When darkness fell, the shrine of the Little Flower of Jesus and its bower of roses were brilliantly illuminated for the first time, and there began what was doubtless the most striking torchlight procession in the history of Scottish devotion. One parish alone sent a thousand pilgrims for the event, and numerous areas of Scotland—and beyond—were represented in that dancing sea of light. The enthusiasm was unbounded, and the widespread joy was a clear sign that the rainfall of spiritual roses had grown into a torrent. May it be a prelude to the homecoming of the children of St. Margaret to the Faith of their fathers! And may these words, laid like a wreath of simple flowers at the feet of Mary and Thérèse, draw a multitude of hearts unto them, wherever the English tongue is spoken.

PART II

THE HOME OF THE SAINT

THE story of the "Little Flower of Jesus" would, in part at least, be unintelligible without an allusion to the garden in which the flower bloomed. "Our Lord," wrote St. Thérèse herself, "would have it spring up in a soil fragrant with purity, where there had already appeared eight fair white lilies." Among her pages of rare beauty, few are more beautiful than those which afford a glimpse into the home of her parents, Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin.

Louis Joseph Stanislaus Martin was born on August 22, 1823, at Bordeaux, while his father was captain in the garrison there. "God has predestined this child for Himself," said the saintly Bishop of Bordeaux on the occasion of his baptism, and events have proved the truth of the prophecy. From Bordeaux the family came later to Alençon in lower Normandy.

Louis Martin was twenty years old when he climbed the mountain of the Great St. Bernard and presented himself for admission as a postulant at the celebrated monastery. The Prior advised him to go back to Alençon, and on the completion of his course of Latin to return to the cloister. Louis turned his steps homeward, sad at heart, but before long he understood clearly that his life was to be otherwise dedicated to God.

A few years after the vain quest of Louis Martin a similar scene was enacted in Alençon itself. Accompanied by her mother, Zélie Guérin presented herself at the Convent of the Sisters of Charity in the hope of gaining admission. For years it had been her desire to share the Sisters' work, but this was not to be. In the

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St. Thérèse with her Mother

interview that followed, the Superioress, guided by the Holy Ghost, as we may well believe, decided that Zélie's vocation was not for the religious life, and that God wanted her in the world. She returned, therefore, to her parents, and to the companionship of her elder sister and her younger brother. Shortly afterwards the gates of the Visitation Convent at Le Mans closed upon her beloved sister, and Zélie's thoughts turned to the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. "O my God!" she repeated constantly, "since I am unworthy to be Thy spouse like my dear sister, I will enter the married state to fulfil Thy holy will. I beseech Thee to make me the mother of many children, and to grant that all of them may be consecrated to Thee."

God heard her prayer, and His finger was visible in the circumstances which led to her becoming the wife of Louis Martin, in the Church of Notre Dame, Alençon, July 12, 1858. Like Tobias and his spouse, they were joined in matrimony—"*solely for the love of children, in whom God's Name might be blessed for ever and ever.*"[1] Nine flowers bloomed in this garden. Of these, four were transplanted to Paradise before their buds had quite unfolded, while five were gathered into God's gardens upon earth—one entering the Visitation Convent in Caen, the others the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux.

From the cradle all were dedicated to Mary Immaculate, and all received her name: Marie Louise, Marie Pauline, Marie Léonie, Marie Hélène (who died at the age of four and a half), Marie Joseph Louis, Marie Joseph Jean Baptiste, Marie Céline, Marie Mélanie Thérèse (who died when three months old) and lastly, *Marie Françoise Thérèse.*

The boys were the fruit of prayers and tears. After the birth of four girls, their parents entreated St. Joseph to obtain for them the favour of a son who should become a priest and a missionary. Marie Joseph was

[1] Cf. Tobias viii. 9.

given to them, but only five months had run their course when Heaven demanded what it had lent.

Then followed more urgent novenas, for the grandeur of the priesthood was so well understood by those Christian parents that their hearts coveted it eagerly. At all costs the family must have a Priest of the Lord—an apostle, perhaps even a martyr, one who should dispense God's Word, God's Bread, God's Pardon. But, *the thoughts of the Lord are not our thoughts, nor are His ways ours.*[1] Another Joseph was born, and with him hope grew strong. Nine months, however, had scarcely passed when he joined his little brother. They did not ask again, but if the veil of the future could have been lifted, their hearts would have been comforted. A daughter was to be vouchsafed them who would be invoked by the missionaries of the Gospel through the length and breadth of Africa, India and China, and who would be a herald of Divine Love, not to one land alone, but to all the ends of earth. They themselves were destined to shine as apostles. In the dedication of the Portuguese edition of the Autobiography, we read these significant words of an eminent Jesuit:

"*To the sacred memory of Louis Joseph Stanislaus Martin and of Zélie Guérin, the blessed parents of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, an example to all Christian parents.*"

Every morning saw them at Mass; together they knelt at the Holy Table. They strictly observed the fasts and abstinences of the Church, kept Sunday as a day of complete rest from work in spite of the remonstrance of friends, and found in pious reading their most delightful recreation. They prayed in common, after the touching example of Captain Martin, whose devout recital of the *Our Father* brought tears to the eyes of his hearers. The great Christian virtues flourished in their home.

[1] Isaias lv. 8.

Wealth did not bring luxury in its train, and the simplicity of olden days characterised the household.

"How mistaken are the great majority of men!" Madame Martin used often to say. "If they are rich, they desire honours; and if these are obtained, they are still unhappy; for that heart can never be satisfied which seeks anything but God." Her whole ambition as a mother was directed towards Heaven. "Four of my children are already safely there," she once wrote, "and the others also will go to that Kingdom, enriched with greater merit because of a more prolonged combat."

Charity in all its forms was a natural outlet to the piety of these simple hearts. Husband and wife set aside each year a considerable portion of their income for the work of the Propagation of the Faith. They relieved poor persons in distress, ministering to them with their own hands. On one occasion Louis Martin was seen to raise a drunken man from the ground in a busy thoroughfare, take his bag of tools, support him on his arm, and lead him home. Another time, seeing in a railway station a poor and starving epileptic without the means to return to his distant home, he was so touched with pity that he took off his hat, and, placing in it an alms, proceeded to beg from the passengers on behalf of the sufferer. Money poured in, and it was with a heart brimming over with gratitude that the sick man blessed his benefactor.

He never allowed human respect to overrule his Christian instincts. In whatever company he might be, he always saluted the Blessed Sacrament when passing a church; nor did he ever meet a priest without paying him a mark of respect. A word from his lips sufficed to silence the blasphemer. In reward for his virtues, God showered even temporal blessings on His faithful servant. In 1871 he was able to give up his business as a jeweller and retire to 42 Rue St. Blaise.

It was in this house that the ninth child of Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin was born, January 2, 1873.

Marie and Pauline were at home for the Christmas holidays from the Visitation Convent at Le Mans. There was, it is true, a slight disappointment that the future priest was still denied them, but it quickly passed, and the little one was regarded as a special gift from Heaven. Two days later she was carried to the church of Notre Dame to receive the Sacrament of Baptism; her eldest sister, Marie, was her godmother, and she received the name of *Marie Françoise Thérèse*.[1] Soon, however, the tender bud drooped on its delicate stem. "You should pray to St. Francis de Sales," wrote her aunt from the convent at Le Mans, "and promise, if the child recover, to call her by her second name, Frances." This was a sword-thrust for the mother. Leaning over the cradle of her Thérèse, she exclaimed: "Only when the last hope has gone, will I promise to call her Frances."

The gentle St. Francis waived his claim in favour of the reformer of the Carmelite Order: the child recovered, and so retained her name of Thérèse. Sorrow, however, was mixed with the mother's joy when she found it necessary to send her to a foster-mother in the country. There the little one throve, and in fourteen months had gained strength sufficient to allow of her being brought back to the Rue St. Blaise. A tablet on the balcony of No. 42 now informs the passers-by that here was born a certain Carmelite, by name, Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. The pilgrims to the spot where the Little Flower first saw the light of day, are not so numerous as those to the shrine where her remains await their glorious resurrection. They may nevertheless be numbered by thousands.[2]

[1] The baptismal entry, with its numerous signatures, is shown to visitors, and a tablet in the baptistery of the beautiful Gothic church tells the pilgrim that here the "Little Queen" was made a child of God. [Ed.]

[2] In May, 1912, her convert, Mr. Alexander Grant, formerly minister of the United Free Church of Scotland, came to reside here, and here he died a holy death on July 19, 1917. The story of his conversion,

The Home of the Saint

After the death of his wife, August 28, 1877, the father of Thérèse left Alençon for Lisieux, a Norman town lying amid the apple orchards of the valley of the Touques. Lisieux is deeply interesting by reason of its old churches of St. Jacques and St. Pierre, and its specimens of quaint houses, some of which date from the twelfth century. St. John Eudes—canonised a fortnight after the "Little Flower"—founded a seminary here, and St. Thomas of Canterbury said Mass in the Hospice, where several of his relics may yet be seen.

It will not be amiss to say a word here about the brother and sister of Madame Martin. Her sister, in religion Sister Marie Dosithea, led at Le Mans a life so holy that she was cited by Dom Guéranger, perhaps the most distinguished Benedictine of the nineteenth century, as the model of a perfect nun. By her own confession, from earliest childhood she had never been guilty of the smallest deliberate fault. She died on February 24, 1877. It was in the convent made fragrant by her aunt's extraordinary holiness that Pauline Martin, the "little Mother" of Thérèse and for five years her Prioress, received her education. And if the Little Flower imbibed the liturgical spirit from her teachers, the daughters of St. Benedict in Lisieux, so that she could say before her death: "I do not think it is possible for anyone to have desired more than I did to assist properly at choir and to recite perfectly the Divine Office"—may we not trace to Le Mans the sweet spirit of St. Francis de Sales which pervades the pages of the Autobiography?

With the brother of Zélie Guérin the reader will make acquaintance in the narrative of Saint Thérèse. He was a chemist in Lisieux, and it was there that his daughter Jeanne Guérin married Dr. La Néele and his

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told before the Tribunal of the Beatification, is depicted in one of the stained-glass windows of the great shrine in Lisieux. R.I.P. Mrs. Grant, a convert likewise, still (1926) has charge of the Saint's birthplace. [Ed.]

younger child Marie entered Carmel. Foreign missionaries had a warm-hearted friend in M. Guérin, who for his charities was made godfather to an African king. God called him to his abundant reward in 1909. Long before the canonisation of her cousin, Marie Guérin—Sister Marie of the Eucharist—had rejoined her in Heaven. When the writer made his first pilgrimage to Lisieux, in 1903, Marie was still alive, as was also the aged Prioress—Mother Mary of Gonzaga—who had received St. Thérèse into the Carmel. Dr. La Néele died more recently, and at the moment, March, 1926, Madame La Néele is the sole surviving relative of the Saint outside of the cloister.

PART III

THE STORY OF THE BOOK

THE writing of her Autobiography by Saint Thérèse was an act of obedience. The superiors who imposed on her the task sought in all simplicity their own edification. But the fragrance of its pages was such that they were advised to give it to the world, and this they did in 1899, two years after the death of the Saint. Over a million copies of the French edition have been sold, and it has been translated into many languages. An English version by Professor Dziewicki of Prague introduced it to the English-speaking public in 1901.

In August, 1911, the present writer published, under the title "*As Little Children*," an abridgement of the Autobiography which has now—March, 1926—reached its 175th thousand.[1] At the instance of the Carmel of Lisieux, and with the aid of devoted friends, he published at Christmas, 1912, "*Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*," the first complete edition of the Life of the Servant of God. It was a fresh translation of her Autobiography, Letters, and Spiritual Counsels, together with an account of some striking favours ascribed to her intercession. Much fresh material was embodied in the work, which was also richly illustrated. The first large edition of 9,000 copies, abnormally large considering its price of six shillings net, was exhausted in nine months, and the volume, nine times reprinted, has now reached its 43rd thousand. In America as well as in Great

[1] It was issued from the Orphans' Press, Rochdale. Nearly two million "Little Flower" leaflets have been printed there, while more than double that number of English leaflets alone have been published from Lisieux.

Britain and Ireland, it has had a marvellous reception. The Canonisation edition of "*Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*" will consist of twenty thousand copies.

The book received a warm welcome from those outside the Catholic Church, and has led more than one soul back to the Fold. More than one Protestant clergyman has had it circulated through his entire parish.[1] The following lines from a letter in *The Universe*, signed by the Rev. A. N. Guest, will scarcely surprise the many clients of Saint Thérèse who have proved her power with God.

THE VICARAGE,
STANTONBURY.

"I believe that East and West will one day be joined together again in a visible unity; and to bring about that reunion I count on the influence of the Autobiography of the '*Little Flower of Jesus.*'

"If we, both Anglicans and Romans, could unite in prayer through the intercession of Sœur Thérèse, and if a novena to her were begun for our reunion, I have no doubt but that it would be as suddenly accomplished as was the conversion of the 3,000 Israelites on the day of Pentecost. I conclude, therefore: let us cease controversy, and betake ourselves to prayer."

A cheaper edition became necessary, and early in 1916 the devoted Brothers of Charity published "*A Little White Flower*" from their Orphans' Press, Rochdale. It contained the Autobiography of our Saint, to which was added the story of her birth and death that the narrative might be complete. This new edition was practically a new translation, for the Carmel of Lisieux had but recently published to the world the exact text of the manuscript of St. Thérèse. The definitive Carmelite edition differed largely from its predecessors. The many changes, though of minor importance, had, therefore, to be incorporated into the new English edition, and the opportunity was taken of retranslating the whole, in order to render the style more flowing and

[1] A certain Anglican convent has no less than six statues of the Little Flower exposed for veneration. [ED.]

the translation more faithful. This definitive English translation of the original Autobiography appears for the first time in the pages of "*Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*" on the occasion of its Canonisation edition.

We now know that the Autobiography is based upon three different manuscripts written by the saintly Carmelite at the command of her superiors. The first and longest manuscript, chapters I—IX of the present volume, was addressed in 1895 to Mother Agnes of Jesus, at that time Prioress. Intended solely for one who had been to her a second mother, and for the other sisters who had lavished upon her a wealth of affection in her early years, it was couched in a familiar and intimate style. This manuscript bore the title of "*The Springtime of a Little White Flower.*" The second, forming chapters X—XII, is clearly more restrained in tone. It was addressed to Mother Mary of Gonzaga, who had received her into the Order and who in 1896 had been re-elected Prioress. The beautiful chapter XIII of the Autobiography was written in 1897 for Marie her eldest sister (in Carmel, Mary of the Sacred Heart).

The manuscripts themselves were neither paged nor divided into chapters, and the contents, sometimes rivalling the finest French prose, were rapidly composed and never revised. In the previous French and English editions it was thought well to rearrange the text and publish it as if it had been a single manuscript, addressed to Mother Mary of Gonzaga. All three manuscripts are now reproduced exactly as they came from the pen of Saint Thérèse. Though alone responsible for this new translation, I wish to express here my deep gratitude to those who have so generously lent their aid in the present and in the past.

"This book"—wrote the great Pontiff, Pius X, to the Prioress of the Carmel of Florence, who had forwarded to him a copy of her Italian translation—"this book, redolent of the virtues of Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux, and into which it may be said that her whole soul has

passed, has been to Us a source of most sweet joy. She has indeed blossomed as a lily, and has shed abroad the lily's perfume. She has put forth a rich fruitage of Divine Grace, and praised to the full her Lord, and blessed Him in His works."

What his two successors, her enthusiastic clients, have said of the book of our Saint, appears in Part III of the epilogue to the Autobiography. The pen of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus herself must now take up the narrative. It will do so in words that not only tell of love but set the heart on fire, and at the same time lay bare the workings of grace in a soul that "from the age of three never refused God anything." In these inimitable pages, as in those of St. Teresa of Avila or St. John of the Cross, the spirit of poetry is the handmaid of holiness. And this translation sets forth again, in our world-wide English tongue, her world-wide mission, that of preaching the ancient message of God's Merciful Love, and of pointing out the ever new *way* to Him of "confidence and self-surrender."

T. N. T.

Feast of the Annunciation.
March 25, 1926.

END OF THE PROLOGUE

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"From the age of three I have never refused our good God anything . . . I have never given Him aught but love, and it is with love He will repay."

(St. Thérèse.)

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST MEMORIES

IT is to you, dearest Mother,[1] to you who are doubly a mother to me, that I am about to confide the story of my soul. When you asked me to write it I feared the task might unsettle me, but Our Lord has deigned to make me understand that by simple obedience I shall please Him best. I begin therefore to sing what must be my eternal song: "*The Mercies of the Lord.*"[2]

Before setting about my task, I knelt before the statue of Our Lady which has given us so many proofs of Our heavenly Mother's loving care. As I knelt, I begged of that dear Mother to guide my hand, and so ensure that only what was pleasing to her should find place here. Then, opening the Gospels, my eyes fell on these words: "*Jesus going up into a mountain called unto Him whom He would Himself.*"[3] They threw a clear light upon the mystery of my vocation and of my entire life, but above all upon the favours Our Lord has granted to my soul. He does not call those who are worthy, but those whom He will. As St. Paul says: "*God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.*[4] *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*"[5]

[1] Her sister Pauline—in religion, Mother Agnes of Jesus. She was then as now (1926) Prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux. At the urgent request of her community, Pius XI has confirmed her in that office for life. Two other sisters of our Saint have survived in the Carmel, and one in the Visitation Convent at Caen, to rejoice in the marvellous triumph of May 17, 1925.

Here begins what St. Thérèse in her manuscript calls THE STORY OF THE SPRINGTIME OF A LITTLE WHITE FLOWER. This first portion of the Autobiography, written in 1895, closes with Chapter IX. [ED.]

[2] Ps. lxxxviii. 1.

[3] Mark iii. 13.

[4] Cf. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

[5] Cf. Rom. ix. 16.

I often asked myself why God has preferences, why all souls do not receive an equal measure of grace. I was filled with wonder when I saw extraordinary favours showered on sinners such as St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Mary Magdalen, and many others whom He forced, so to speak, to receive His grace. In reading the lives of the Saints, I was surprised to see there were certain privileged souls whom Our Lord favoured from the cradle to the grave, allowing no obstacle in their path which might keep them from mounting towards Him, and preventing sin from soiling the spotless brightness of their baptismal robe. And again it puzzled me why so many poor savages should die without having even heard the name of God.

Our Lord has deigned to explain to me this mystery. He showed me the book of Nature, and I understood that every flower created by Him is beautiful, that the brilliance of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not lessen the perfume of the violet or the sweet simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all the lowly flowers wished to be roses, Nature would lose her springtide beauty, and the fields would no longer be enamelled with lovely hues.

It is the same in the world of souls, Our Lord's living garden. He has been pleased to create great Saints who may be compared to the lily and the rose; but He has also created lesser ones, who must be content to be daisies or simple violets flowering at His feet, and whose mission is to gladden His divine eyes when He deigns to look down on them: the more joyfully they do His will, the greater is their perfection.

I understood this also, that God's love is made manifest as well in a simple soul which does not resist His grace as in one more highly endowed. In fact, the characteristic of love being self-abasement, were all souls to resemble the holy Doctors who have illumined the Church, it would seem as if God in coming to them did not stoop low enough. He has created, however, the

little child who knows nothing and can but utter feeble cries, and the poor savage who has only the natural law to guide him, and it is to their hearts that He deigns to stoop. These are the field flowers whose simplicity charms Him; and by His condescension to them Our Saviour shows His infinite greatness. As the sun shines both on the cedar and on the smallest flower, so the Divine Sun illumines each soul, great or lowly, and all things work together for its good, just as in Nature the seasons are so disposed that on the appointed day the humblest daisy shall unfold its petals.

You will wonder, little Mother, to what all this is leading, for I have said nothing yet that sounds like the story of my life; but did you not tell me to write quite freely whatever came into my mind? It will not be a biography, properly so called, that you will find in these pages, but my thoughts about the graces Our Lord has been pleased to bestow on His spouse.

I am now at a time of life when I can look back on the past, for my soul has been refined in the crucible of interior and exterior trials. Now, like a flower after the storm, I can raise my head and see that the words of the psalm are realised in me: *The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment. He hath converted my soul. He hath led me on the paths of justice for His own Name's sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me.*"[1]

To me He has indeed been always "*compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy.*"[2] So it gives me great joy, dear Mother, to come to you and sing His unspeakable mercies. It is for *you alone*[3] that I write the story of the *Little Flower* gathered by Jesus. This thought will help me to speak freely, with-

[1] Cf. Ps. xxii. 1-4.
[2] Ps. cii. 8.
[3] Italics her own; and so throughout the Autobiography, with the exception of quotations from Holy Scripture. [Ed.]

out troubling either about style or about the many digressions I shall make; for a mother's heart always understands her child, even when it can only lisp, and therefore I am quite sure of being understood by the little Mother who made ready my heart and offered it to Our Lord.

If a little flower could speak, it seems to me that it would tell quite simply what God had done for it, without hiding any of its gifts. It would not say, under the pretext of humility, that it was not pretty and had not a sweet scent, that the sun had withered its petals or the storm bruised its stem—if it knew such were not the case.

The flower now telling her tale rejoices in having to publish the wholly undeserved favours of Our Lord. She knows that in herself she had nothing worthy of attracting Him; His mercy it was that filled her with good things—His mercy alone. He allowed her to see the light in a holy soil fragrant with the odour of purity. He caused eight fair white lilies to spring up there before she appeared. In His love He willed to preserve her from the poisoned breath of the world, for hardly had her petals unfolded when this good Master transplanted her to the mountain of Carmel, Our Lady's garden of delight.[1]

[1] Carmel means *a garden*. Formerly proverbial for its luxuriant beauty, the range of Carmel is still remarkable for its trees and flowers and sweet-smelling plants. Hermits dwelt in its caves at an early date, and during the second half of the twelfth century St. Berthold, with ten companions, settled there from Europe near the grotto once occupied by Elias. According to tradition St. Berthold was favoured with an apparition of the prophet. The newcomers built a chapel in honour of the Mother of God, and the "Hermits of Our Lady of Mount Carmel" multiplied so rapidly that in 1208 the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Albert, drew up for them a rule of life. Pope Honorius III, who approved of the Dominicans in 1216, and of the Franciscans in 1223, gave his approbation to the Carmelite rule in 1226. A cruel persecution by the Turks, in 1251, compelled the Hermits to return to Europe.

In 1245 Innocent IV raised the eremitical Congregation to the rank of a mendicant Order. That same year, the first general chapter was held at Aylesford in Kent, when an English Carmelite, St. Simon Stock, was elected general. The famous apparition of Our Lady to this Saint took place near Winchester, July 16, 1251. Giving him a brown scapular, she promised that those who died wearing it would not suffer from the eternal flames.

Earliest Memories

Having summed up in a few words all that God has done for me, I will now relate in detail the story of my childhood. I know that what to others might seem wearisome will not be without charm for my Mother. Besides, the memories I am about to evoke are not mine alone. It was at your side my early years were spent, and together we shared the devoted care of God-fearing parents. May they now bless me tenderly, who am the least of their children, and help me to sing the divine mercies!

Up to the time of my entry into Carmel, the *story of my soul* is marked by three distinct periods. The first, though short, is not without its rich harvest of memories. It extends from the dawn of reason to the death of our dearly loved Mother: that is to say, till I was four years and eight months old. God, in His goodness, did me the favour of awakening my intelligence when I was still very young, and He has so deeply engraved in my mind the impressions of childhood that past events seem to have happened but yesterday. His design, no doubt, was to make me know and appreciate the excellent mother He had given me, but alas! His divine hand soon took her from me to crown her in Heaven.

Throughout my life it has pleased God to surround

Another general, Blessed John Soreth, born at Caen, 1420, founded (or affiliated) the first convent of Carmelite nuns, and tried to restore among his friars the strict rule of St. Albert. This triumph was reserved for St. Teresa, like St. Simon a devoted client of Our Lady. She founded the first house of Discalced (*i.e.*, barefooted) Carmelite nuns in 1562, at Avila in Spain. With the aid of St. John of the Cross she extended the reform to the houses of the friars, and her companion, Mother Anne of Jesus, brought the Sisters to Paris in 1604. The Carmel of Lisieux is a foundation from that of Poitiers, and dates back to 1838. At present there are in existence about 20 convents of Calced nuns, and about 400 of the Discalced.

The Carmelite enclosure is very strict; in the parlour a veil covers the grille. In addition to other penances the nuns abstain perpetually from flesh-meat, fast upon one meal a day from September 14 till Easter, wear coarse garments, retire to rest on straw pallets about 11.30 p.m. and rise during the greater part of the year at 4.45 a.m. Besides their hours of vocal prayer, they spend two hours daily in mental prayer. Their tender devotion to Mary makes the Order her "garden of delight." Amid all the austerity the gaiety of Carmelites is proverbial, like the beauty of Carmel itself. "God alone suffices," wrote St. Teresa. [ED.]

me with affection; my earliest recollections are of tender caresses and smiles. And if He allowed so much love to be lavished upon me, He also endowed me with a warm and sensitive heart to return it. Of my affection for Papa and Mamma it would be difficult to convey an idea, and as I think of the thousand ways in which it was shown I cannot suppress a smile.

You have given me the letters which Mamma wrote to you while you were at Le Mans, studying at the Visitation Convent there. They are charming letters inspired by a mother's love and hence too often full of my praise. I shall find it easier to quote from them, though I remember distinctly the events to which they refer. In proof of what I have said about my way of showing affection for my parents, here is what Mamma writes:

"Baby is the dearest little rogue; she will kiss me and at the same time wish me to die. 'Oh, how I wish you would die, dear Mamma!' Astonished at being scolded for saying such a thing, she will answer: 'It is because I want you to go to Heaven, and you say that to get there we must die!' In her outbursts of affection for her Father, she wishes him also to die. The dear little thing will hardly ever leave me; she delights in following me about, especially in the garden. If I am not there, she refuses to stay, and is so inconsolable that she has to be brought back to me again. She will not even go upstairs by herself without calling at every step, 'Mamma, Mamma!' and if I forget to answer, 'Yes, darling!' she waits where she is and will not move."

I was nearly three years old when Mamma wrote:

"Little Thérèse asked me the other day if she would go to Heaven. 'Yes, if you are good,' I told her. 'Oh, Mamma,' she answered, 'then if I am not good, shall I go to hell? Well, I know what I will do—I will fly to you in Heaven, and you will hold me tight in your arms, and how could God take me away then?' I saw by her look she was convinced that God could do nothing to her if she hid herself in my arms.

"Marie loves her little sister very much; indeed, she is a child who delights us all. She is extraordinarily outspoken, and it is charming to see her run after me to confess her childish

faults: 'Mamma, I gave Céline a push; I slapped her once; but I will not do it again.' The moment she has done anything mischievous, everyone must know. Yesterday, without meaning to do so, she tore off a small piece of wall paper; you would have been sorry for her—she wanted to tell her Father immediately. When he came home four hours later and everyone else had forgotten about it, she ran at once to Marie, saying: 'Tell Papa that I tore the paper,' and she waited like a criminal for sentence. There is an idea in her little head, that if she accuses herself she will be the more readily forgiven."

Papa's name fills me with many happy memories. As soon as he came home I would run to meet him, seat myself on his foot, and so he would carry me about through house and garden. Then he would take me in his arms, lift me high up in the air, set me on his shoulder and load me with caresses. Mamma used to say, laughingly, that he always did whatever I wanted; and he would answer: "Well, why not? She is the Queen!" Yet I cannot say that he spoilt me. I remember one day while I was merrily swinging he called out as he passed: "Come and give me a kiss, little Queen!" Contrary to my usual custom, I would not stir, and answered pertly: "You must come yourself for it, Papa!" But he wisely took no notice of me.

"You naughty little girl," exclaimed Marie, "to answer Papa so rudely!" Her reproof took effect. I immediately got off the swing and the whole house resounded with my cries. As I hurried upstairs, this time not waiting to call "Mamma!" at every step, my one thought was to find Papa and make my peace with him, which, needless to say, was quickly done.

I could not bear to think I had grieved our beloved parents, and I acknowledged my faults instantly, as this little anecdote, related by Mamma, will show:

"One morning before going downstairs I wanted to kiss Thérèse, but she seemed to be fast asleep and I did not like to wake her. Marie, seeing my hesitation, said: 'I am certain she is only pretending.' I then bent down towards her, and immediately she hid herself under the bed-clothes, saying in the

tone of a spoilt child: 'I don't want anyone to look at me.' I was not pleased with her, and I told her so. A minute or two later I heard her crying, and shortly after, to my great surprise, I found her at my side. She had managed to get out of her cot unaided, and, stumbling over her long nightdress, had come downstairs barefoot. Her little face was wet with tears: 'Mamma,' she said, throwing herself on my knee, 'forgive me for being so naughty!' Pardon was soon granted; I pressed the little angel to my heart, half smothering her with kisses."

I remember also the great affection I had for my dear god-mother,[1] who had just left school. Without appearing to do so, I took in all that I saw and heard, and it seems to me that I judged of things then as I judge of them now. I listened attentively while she taught Céline, and I was very good and obedient so as to obtain the privilege of remaining in the room during lessons. Marie loaded me with little presents which, trifling though they were, afforded me endless pleasure.

I was proud of my two big sisters, and thought of you from morning till night, you seemed so far away. When I was just learning to talk, Mamma would ask me: "What are you thinking about?" and the invariable answer was: "Pauline." Sometimes I heard it said that you would be a nun, and without quite understanding what that meant I used to think: "I too will be a nun." This is one of my earliest recollections, and I have never changed my mind; so you see, when I was only two years old, it was your example that drew me to the Divine Spouse of virgins. What tender memories I could here confide to you, were I not afraid of being carried too far!

Dear Léonie also had a warm place in my heart and my great love for her was fully returned. In the evening, when she came from school, she used to take care of me while everyone else went for a walk, and it seems as though I can still hear the sweet songs she sang to lull me to sleep. I remember perfectly the day of her First Communion, and I remember her companion, the poor

[1] Her eldest sister, Marie Louise, educated at the Visitation Convent of Le Mans. [Ed.]

child whom Mamma dressed, according to the touching custom of the well-to-do families in Alençon. This child did not leave Léonie throughout all that happy day, and at the grand dinner in the evening she sat in the place of honour. I was too small to stay up for the feast, but, thanks to Papa's goodness, I had my share in it, for when the dessert came round, he himself brought his little Queen a piece of the First Communion cake.

The only one now left to speak of is Céline, the companion of my childhood. My memories of her are so abundant that I do not know how to choose. We understood each other perfectly, though I was much the more forward and lively, and by far the less simple of the two. Here is a letter which will show you, dear Mother, how much sweeter Céline was than naughty Thérèse. I was then nearly three, and Céline six and a half.

"Céline is naturally inclined to be good; as to that little puss, Thérèse, one cannot tell how she will turn out, she is still so young and thoughtless. She is a very intelligent child, but has not nearly so sweet a disposition as her sister, and her stubbornness is almost unconquerable. When she has said 'No,' nothing will make her change; you might leave her all day in the cellar without getting her to say 'Yes.' She would rather sleep there than do so."

I had another fault, that of strong self-love, which Mamma did not mention in her letters. Here are a couple of instances:—One day, wishing no doubt to see how far my pride would go, she said, smiling: "Thérèse, if you will kiss the ground I will give you a halfpenny." In those days the sum was a fortune, and in order to gain it I had not far to stoop, for I was so tiny that there was not much distance between my lips and the ground; but my pride was up in arms, and, holding myself erect, I replied: "No, thank you, Mamma, I would rather go without the halfpenny."

Another time when we were going into the country

to see some friends, Mamma told Marie to put on my prettiest frock, but not to let me have bare arms. I did not utter a word, and appeared as indifferent as children of that age should be, but in my own mind I said: "I should have looked much prettier with bare arms."

With such a disposition it is clear that had I been brought up by careless parents, I should have become very wicked, and perhaps have lost my soul. But Jesus watched over His little spouse, and turned all her faults to advantage, since by being checked early in life, they became a means of leading her towards perfection. For instance, as I had great self-love and an innate love of good as well, it was enough to tell me once: "You must not do that!" and I never wanted to do it again. With nothing but good example before my eyes, I naturally wished to follow it, and I see with pleasure in my Mother's letters that as I grew older I began to be a greater comfort to her. This is what she writes in 1876:

"Even Thérèse is anxious to practise mortification. Marie has given her little sisters a string of beads on purpose to count their acts of self-denial, and they have really spiritual, but very amusing, conversations together. The other day Céline asked: 'How can God be in such a tiny Host?' and Thérèse answered: 'That is not strange, because God is Almighty.' 'And what does Almighty mean?' continued Céline. 'It means,' said Thérèse, 'that He can do whatever He likes.' But it is still more amusing to see Thérèse continually putting her hand in her pocket and pulling a bead along the string for every little sacrifice.

"The children are inseparable and need no other company. Nurse having made Thérèse a present of two bantams, every day after dinner she and Céline sit by the fire playing with them.

"One morning Thérèse climbed out of her cot and made her way into Céline's; when it was time to dress her, nurse found the little one clinging affectionately to her sister: 'Oh, Louise!' she exclaimed, 'do leave me here! Don't you see we are just like the little bantams, we cannot be separated!'"

That was true. I could not bear to be away from Céline; I would rather leave my dessert unfinished than let her leave the table without me. The moment she rose I turned round in my high chair and had to get down at once, then we would run off to play together.

I was still too small for the long Sunday services, so Mamma stayed at home to look after me. On these occasions I was very good and quiet, walking all the while on tip-toe; but as soon as I heard the door open there was a tremendous outburst of joy. Rushing to my dear little sister I would exclaim: "Oh, Céline! quick, give me the blessed bread!"[1]

One day she did not bring any. What was to be done? I could not do without it, for I looked upon this little feast as my Mass. A bright idea struck me, and I said: "You have no blessed bread, well then, make some!" Céline immediately opened the cupboard, took out the bread, cut off a tiny bit, and, after saying a *Hail Mary* over it with due solemnity, she triumphantly presented it to me. Making the sign of the Cross I ate it most religiously and fancied it tasted exactly like the real blessed bread.

Under the impression, no doubt, that she was too big to play with dolls, Léonie one day brought us a basket filled with their frocks, and other trifles. On these she laid her doll: "Here, dears," she said, "choose whatever you like." Céline looked at it, and took a woollen ball. After a moment's thought I put out my hand, saying: "I choose everything," and I carried off both doll and basket without more ado.

This childish incident sums up, so to speak, the whole of my life. Later on, when the way of perfection was opened out before me, I realised that to become a Saint one must suffer much, one must always

[1] The custom still prevails in many parts of France of blessing unleavened bread at the Offertory of the Mass and then distributing it to the faithful. It is known as *pain bénit*. This blessing only takes place at the Parochial Mass. [Ed.]

choose the most perfect path. I also understood that there are many degrees of holiness, each soul being free to respond to the calls of Our Lord, and to do much or little for His love—in a word, to select amongst the sacrifices He asks. Then also, as in the days of my childhood, I cried out: "My God, I choose everything—I will not be a Saint by halves, I am not afraid of suffering for Thee. One thing only do I fear, and that is, to follow my own will. Accept then the offering I make of it, for I choose *all* that Thou willest!"

But, dear Mother, I am forgetting myself, I must not tell you yet of my girlhood, I am still speaking of the baby of three or four years old.

I remember a dream I had at that age which impressed itself very deeply on my memory. I thought I was walking alone in the garden when, suddenly, I saw near the arbour two hideous little devils dancing with surprising agility on a barrel of lime in spite of the heavy irons attached to their feet. At first they cast fiery glances at me; then, as though suddenly terrified, I saw them in the twinkling of an eye throw themselves down to the bottom of the barrel. They came out of that somehow or other, only to run and hide in the laundry which opened into the garden. Finding them such cowards, I wanted to know what they were going to do, and overcoming my fears I went to the window. The wretched creatures kept racing about on the tables, quite at a loss how to hide from my gaze. Now and again they would come nearer and peer through the windows with an uneasy air, but finding me still at my post, they would scamper off looking the picture of misery.

Of course this dream was nowise extraordinary; yet I believe Our Lord made use of it to show me that a soul in the state of grace has nothing to fear from the devil, who is a coward, and will fly even from the gaze of a little child.

Dear Mother, how happy I was at that age! Not

only was I beginning to enjoy life but virtue itself wore a charm. It seems to me that my dispositions were the same then as now, for even at that time I possessed a very large measure of self-control. I made it a practice never to complain when my things were taken, and if at any time I were unjustly accused, I preferred to keep silence rather than attempt an excuse. There was, however, no merit in all this, for it came to me quite naturally.

How quickly those sunny years of early childhood passed away, and how sweet the memories they have left behind! I think with delight of the Sunday walks, when our beloved Mother always accompanied us. Indeed, I can still feel the vivid and poetic impressions made on my childish heart by the vision of the cornfields studded with cornflowers, poppies, and marguerites. Even at that age I loved far-stretching views, sunlit spaces, and stately trees: in a word all the beauties of nature cast their spell upon me and raised my soul to Heaven.

Often during these walks we met poor people, and I was always the one chosen to give them an alms, which made me feel happy indeed. Sometimes Papa took me home, knowing the way was too long for his little Queen. This was a cause of trouble, and to console me Céline would fill her pretty basket with daisies, and give them to me on her return. Truly everything on earth smiled on me; I found flowers strewn at each step, and my naturally happy disposition helped to make life bright. But a new era was about to dawn. I was to be the spouse of Our Lord at so tender an age that it was necessary I should suffer from childhood.

As the early spring flowers begin to come up under the snow and open at the first rays of the sun, so the Little Flower, whose story I am writing, had to pass through the winter of trial and have her delicate cup filled with the dew of tears.

CHAPTER II

A CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD

ALL the details of Mamma's illness are still fresh in my mind. I remember especially her last weeks on earth, when Céline and I felt like poor little exiles. Every morning a friend came to fetch us, and we spent the day at her house. Once, when we had not had time to say our prayers, before starting, my little sister whispered to me on the way: "Must we tell that we have not said our prayers?" "Yes, certainly!" I answered. So, on our arrival Céline timidly made it known to our friend, who replied: "Well, children, you shall say them," and taking us to a large room she left us there. Céline looked at me in amazement. I too was astonished and exclaimed: "This is not like Mamma; she always said our prayers with us." During the day, in spite of all efforts to amuse us, the thought of our dear Mother was constantly in our minds. I remember once when Céline had an apricot given to her, she leant towards me and said: "We will not eat it, I will give it to Mamma." Alas! our beloved Mother was now too ill to eat of any earthly fruit; she would never more be satisfied but with the glory of Heaven. There she would drink of the mysterious wine which Jesus, at His Last Supper, promised to share with us in the Kingdom of His Father.

The touching ceremony of Extreme Unction made a deep impression on me. I can see the spot where I knelt, and hear poor Father's sobs. The day after Mamma's death[1] he took me in his arms, saying:

[1] Madame Martin died on the night of August 28, 1877, in her 47th year. She lies buried (since 1894) in the cemetery of Lisieux, by the side of M. Martin and her four children who died in infancy. [ED.]

"Come, child, kiss your dear Mother for the last time!" and without a word I put my lips to her icy forehead. I do not remember having cried much, and I did not speak to anyone of all that filled my heart. I looked and listened in silence, seeing many things they would have hidden from me.

Once I found myself alone in front of the coffin, which had been placed upright in the passage, and for a long time I stood there lost in contemplation. I had never seen one before, but I knew quite well what it meant. I was so small that I had to lift up my head to see its whole length, and it seemed a huge and melancholy thing.

Fifteen years later I was again standing by a coffin, that of our holy Mother Genevieve, and I was carried back to the days of my childhood. Memories crowded in upon me; it was the same Thérèse who looked on, but she had grown and the coffin seemed small. There was no need to lift up her head, unless to gaze upon Heaven; and Heaven seemed full of joy, for trials had so matured her soul that nothing on earth could make her grieve.

Our Lord did not leave me wholly an orphan. On the day when our dear Mother's remains received the last blessing of the Church, He gave me a second mother and allowed me to choose her freely. We were all five together looking sadly at one another, when our nurse turned pityingly to Céline and to me: "Poor little things!" she said, "you have no longer a mother!" Céline then threw herself into Marie's arms, crying: "Well, you shall be my mother!" Accustomed to imitate Céline, I should undoubtedly have followed her example but that I feared you might be pained, and feel yourself forsaken if you too had not a little daughter. So I looked at you affectionately, and hiding my head on your breast exclaimed in my turn: "And Pauline will be *my* mother!"

With Mamma's death, as I have already said, began

the second period of my life, the most sorrowful of all, especially after you, my little Mother, had entered Carmel. It lasted for the space of ten years. At the age of fourteen I recovered much of my early gaiety, though at the same time I began to realise the serious side of life.

Immediately after Mamma's death my naturally happy disposition deserted me. You know, dear Mother, how from being lively and demonstrative, I became timid and shy, and so sensitive that a look was often sufficient to make me burst into tears. I could not bear to be noticed, or to meet strangers, and I was only at ease with my dear ones at home. There I was always cherished with the most loving care. Papa's affectionate heart seemed endowed with a mother's love, while you and Marie were no less tender and devoted. If Our Lord had not lavished His sunshine upon His Little Flower, she never could have become acclimatised to this earth. Still too weak to bear either rain or storm, she needed warmth, refreshing dew, and gentle breezes—gifts never denied her, even in the wintry season of trials.

I felt no grief at leaving Alençon[1]: children love change and anything out of the common, so I was pleased to come to Lisieux. I remember distinctly the journey and the arrival in the evening at our uncle's house; I can still see our little cousins Jeanne and Marie waiting with aunt on the doorstep.[2] How touching was the affection all these dear ones showed us!

Next day they took us to our new home, *Les Buissonnets*,[3] and there everything proved a fresh source of

[1] M. Martin's object in coming to Lisieux was to bring his girls nearer their mother's brother, M. Guérin, a chemist in that town, as well as to secure Mme. Guérin's advice in the upbringing of the younger ones. [CARMEL.]

[2] M. Guérin lived quite close to the Church of St. Pierre, above what was then the *Pharmacie Guérin*. [ED.]

[3] The house and grounds have been beautifully restored and many souvenirs of Thérèse's childhood are now gathered there. The room where Our Lady appeared to her has been fitted up as an oratory, blessed in May, 1913, by Mgr. Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux. In the garden may be seen one of her miniature altars. [ED.]

delight. The trim lawn in front of the house, the kitchen garden at the back, the distant view from the large attic windows—all this appealed to my young imagination. Its situation, too, was an added charm, for it stood in a quiet part of the town, within easy reach of a beautiful park[1] laid out with flowers. This pleasant abode became the scene of many joys, and of family gatherings which I can never forget. Elsewhere, as I have said above, I felt an exile; I cried and fretted for Mamma; but here my little heart expanded and I smiled on life once more.

When I woke, you were there to caress me, and at your side I said my prayers. My reading lesson followed later, and I remember that "Heaven" was the first word I could read alone. Lessons over, I ran upstairs, where Papa was generally to be found, and how pleased I was when I had good marks to show!

Each afternoon I went with him for a walk, and made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in one or other of the churches. It was in this way that I first saw the chapel of our Carmel: "Look, little Queen!" said Papa, "behind that grating there are holy nuns who are always praying to Almighty God." Little did I think that nine years later I should be amongst them, that in this blessed Carmel I should receive so many graces.

On returning home I learned my lessons, and then spent the rest of the day playing in the garden near Papa. I never cared for dolls, but one of my favourite amusements was making coloured mixtures with seeds and the bark of trees. If the colour turned out pretty I would pour some of the liquid into a dainty little cup and coax Papa to taste. He would at once stop his work, and with a smile pretend to drink.

I was also very fond of flowers, and in a recess which

[1] *Jardin de l'Etoile.* It is not open to the general public. The pilgrim in search of *Les Buissonnets* goes to the Church of St. Jacques, passes behind St. Pierre, and a little further along the Boulevard Herbet-Fournet, a narrow road to the right, called the *Chemin des Buissonnets*, leads to the house occupied for eleven years by our Saint. [ED.]

by some good fortune happened to be in the garden wall, I used to make little altars and decorate them. When all was ready, I would run and call Papa. To give me pleasure he would appear lost in admiration over the wonderful altar that to me seemed a masterpiece.[1] If I were to tell you of the thousand and one such incidents my memory treasures, I should never stop. How, indeed, could words convey all the love and devotion which that best of fathers lavished upon his little Queen!

Those were supremely happy days when my dear "King," as I called him, went fishing and took me with him. Sometimes I tried my hand with a small rod of my own, but more often I preferred to sit on the grass at some little distance. My reflections would then become really deep, and without knowing what meditation meant, my soul was absorbed in prayer. Far-off sounds wafted towards me on the murmuring breeze, and faint notes of music from the neighbouring town, tinged my thoughts with gentle melancholy. Earth seemed a land of exile and I dreamed of Heaven.

The afternoon passed quickly. It was soon time to turn home, and before packing up I would eat the provisions I had brought in my little basket. Somehow the very slices of bread and jam you had prepared looked different; in the morning they were so fresh and tempting, and now they appeared stale and uninviting. Even a trifle such as this made earth seem sadder, and I understood more fully still that only in Heaven will there be unclouded joy.

I remember one day when we were out, how angry clouds darkened the lovely blue sky, and a storm, accompanied by vivid lightning, burst overhead. I looked round on every side so as to lose nothing of the splendid scene. A thunderbolt fell in a field close by, and far from being the least bit frightened, I was overjoyed—God seemed so near. Papa, however, less pleased than

[1] The tiny monstrance, chalice, missal, cruets, candlesticks, statues, etc., are still carefully treasured at *Les Buissonnets*. [Ed.]

his Queen, soon put an end to my rapture, for several meadows separated us from the road, and already the grass and the great tall daisies, taller than I, were sparkling with liquid jewels. Though hampered with his fishing tackle, he carried me in his arms, while I looked down with admiration on the beautiful diamonds below.

I have not, I think, mentioned that in our daily walks at Lisieux, as at Alençon, I often gave alms to the beggars we met by the way. Once we came upon a poor old man, who with great difficulty was dragging himself along on crutches. I went up to him with my penny, but he looked at me long and sadly, then smiling sorrowfully he refused my alms. I cannot express what I felt; I had wished to bring help and comfort and instead I had perhaps only caused pain. He must have guessed my thoughts, for when we were some distance off I saw him turn round and smile at me.

Just at that moment Papa bought me a cake, and I longed to run after the old man, thinking that though he did not want money he would be certain to like a cake. Fear held me back, however, and I felt so sorry that it was with difficulty I could repress my tears. Finally I remembered having heard that Our Lord grants all the favours we ask on our First Communion Day. The thought instantly dispelled my grief, and though I was then only six, I resolved to pray for my poor old man when that day should come. Five years later I faithfully kept my resolution, and I have always believed that my childish prayer for this suffering member of Christ has had its blessing and reward.

As I grew older, my love of God grew more and more, and I frequently offered Him my heart, using the words Mamma had taught me. I tried very hard to please Him in all my actions, and was most careful never to offend Him. Yet one day I committed a fault which it would be well to mention here; it affords me a good opportunity of humbling myself and I think my contrition for it has been perfect.

It was the month of May, 1878. You considered me too young to attend the May devotions every evening, so I stayed at home with Victoire, the maid. We said our prayers together before my little altar, which I had arranged in my own way. Candlesticks, vases, flowers —everything was small. Two wax vestas were quite sufficient to light it up, but on rare occasions, and as a surprise, Victoire would treat me to some bits of real candle.

One evening, as we were going to begin our prayers, I asked her to recite the *Memorare* while I lighted up. She tried to begin, then glancing at me she burst out laughing. At the sight of my precious vestas burning away, I again begged her to say the *Memorare* quickly. Again there was silence, broken only by laughter, and with that all my good temper deserted me. I sprang to my feet and stamping furiously, cried out: "Victoire, you naughty thing!" The poor girl ceased laughing at once and stared at me in blank amazement. Then from under her apron, but all too late, she produced the surprise she had in store—two candle-ends. My tears of anger were soon changed into tears of repentance, and full of shame at having shown such temper I firmly resolved it should never occur again.

Shortly after this I made my first confession.[1] What a consoling memory! You had told me, dear Mother, that it was not to a man but to God Himself that I was going to tell my sins, and this truth so impressed me, that I asked you seriously if I should tell Father Ducellier[2] I loved him "with my whole heart," since it was God I was going to speak to in his person.

[1] Our Saint first received the Sacrament of Penance in the beautiful Gothic church of St. Pierre. This was formerly the cathedral of Lisieux, until Napoleon united Bayeux and Lisieux. Bishop Cauchon, the enemy of St. Joan of Arc, built the exquisite Lady Chapel, as an act of reparation according to some authorities. The parish church of St. Thérèse was the church of St. Jacques, close by, but M. Guérin belonged to St. Pierre, and M. Martin accompanied him. [Ed.]

[2] Fr. Ducellier died in 1917, Arch-priest of St. Pierre of Lisieux. [Carmel.]

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Church of St. Pierre.

Well instructed as to what I should do, I entered the confessional and knelt down. When the priest opened the slide he saw no one, for I was so small that my head came beneath the elbow-rest. He then bade me stand up. Turning towards him in order to see him better, I made my confession and received absolution in a spirit of the most lively faith, for you had assured me that at that solemn moment the tears of the Holy Child would purify my soul. I remember he exhorted me to be devout to Our Lady, and how I determined to redouble my love for her who already filled so large a place in my heart.

Finally I passed him my Rosary to bless, and came out of the confessional feeling more lighthearted and happy than ever before. It was evening, and as soon as I reached a street-lamp I paused, took the newly blessed Rosary from my pocket, and examined it carefully, turning it over and over. "What are you looking at, Thérèse dear?" you asked. "I am looking to see what a blessed Rosary is like," I answered, and the artless reply afforded you much merriment. The influence of the grace I had received remained for a long time with me, and I went afterwards to confession for all the great feasts. These confessions, I may add, filled my young heart with transports of joy.

The Feasts! What precious memories those simple words recall. I loved them; and you knew so well how to explain the mysteries hidden in each one. They were indeed a foretaste of Heaven. Above all, I loved the processions of the Blessed Sacrament. What a joy it was to strew flowers in God's path! But before letting them fall under His feet, I threw them high up in the air, and never was I more happy than when I saw my rose-petals touch the sacred Monstrance.

True, the great feasts came but seldom. Each week, however, brought one very dear to my heart—Sunday.[1]

[1] In the French, *dimanche*, from (*dies*) *dominica*, meaning "The Lord's Day"—*i.e.*, the day commemorative of His triumphant Resur-

What a glorious day! It was Almighty God's feast and the day of rest. First of all, the whole family went to High Mass, and I remember that before the sermon we had to leave our places, which were a good way from the pulpit, and find seats in the nave.[1] This was not always easy, though everyone was ready to offer a chair to little Thérèse and her Father. My good uncle was always delighted to see us draw near; he called me his "sunbeam," and used to say that the picture of the venerable old man leading his little daughter by the hand was one that moved him deeply.

For my part I was too engrossed in listening to the preacher to trouble about the attention I attracted. A sermon on the Passion of Our Blessed Lord was the first I thoroughly understood, and I was profoundly touched. I was then five and a half, and from that time I understood and appreciated all the instructions. If St. Teresa were mentioned, Papa would bend down and whisper: "Listen attentively, little Queen, he is speaking of your holy patroness." I really did listen attentively, though I must own that I often looked at Papa more than at the preacher, I read so many things in his noble face. Sometimes his eyes were filled with tears which he strove in vain to keep back; and, as he listened to the eternal truths, he seemed no longer of this world, it was as though his soul had soared to a higher sphere. Alas! his journey was far from its close: long years of suffering lay between him and the hour when his eyes would open upon the beauties of Heaven, and when Our Divine Lord's hand would wipe away the bitter tears of His faithful servant.

But to return to our Sundays. These happy days, which passed all too quickly, had also their touch of

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rection. Pius X restored it to its former important position in the ecclesiastical calendar, from which it had long been displaced by the feasts of the Saints. [Ed.]

[1] St. Thérèse heard Mass on Sundays in the little chapel of St. Joseph of Cupertino, to the right of the High Altar. A large statue of her was placed there in 1923. [Ed.]

melancholy. My joy lasted till Compline, but after that a feeling of sadness took possession of me. I thought of the morrow when the daily round of work and lessons would begin again, and feeling like an exile on this earth, I longed for the repose of Heaven, the never-ending Sabbath of our true Home. Every Sunday, aunt invited us in turns to spend the evening with her, and I was always glad when my turn came. It was a pleasure to listen to my uncle's conversation, which when serious interested me greatly, and he little knew that I paid such attention. But my pleasure was not unmixed with fear when, taking me on his knee, he would sing "Blue Beard" in a deep loud voice.

At about eight o'clock Papa would come to bring me home, and I remember how on the way I looked up at the stars with untold delight. Orion's belt, like a cluster of diamonds hung in the deep vault overhead, had a wonderful fascination for me, because I saw in it a likeness to the letter "T." "Look, Papa!" I would cry, "*my name is written in Heaven!*" Then, no longer wishing to see this dull earth, I would ask him to lead me on, while with head thrown back I gazed unweariedly at the starry skies.

There is much I could tell you about our winter evenings at home. After a game of draughts, you or Marie used to read aloud from the *Liturgical Year*,[1] and then a few pages from some other instructive and interesting book. During this time I always sat on Papa's knee. When the reading was over, he would rock me gently, my head pillowed on his breast, and would sing in his beautiful voice some soothing melody as if to lull me to sleep.

At length we went upstairs for night prayers. Once again my place was beside our beloved Father, and I had but to look at him to learn how the Saints pray.

[1] By the illustrious Dom Guéranger, Abbot of Solesmes. This book, like the *Imitation of Christ*, had a considerable influence upon her spiritual life. There exists an English edition in fifteen volumes, published by Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. [Ed.]

Then you put me to bed, dear little Mother, and I invariably asked you: "Have I been good to-day? Is God pleased with me? Will the Angels watch over me?" "Yes," was the unfailing reply—were it not, I should have spent the night in tears. You and Marie then kissed me, and little Thérèse was left alone in the dark.

I consider it an important matter that from childhood I was taught to overcome my fears. Occasionally you sent me in the evening to fetch something from a room at the other side of the house, wisely taking no refusal; but for this I should have become nervous, whereas now it is difficult to frighten me. I wonder how you were able to bring me up with so much tenderness, and yet not spoil me. You neither passed over the least fault, nor scolded me without cause, and I knew well that a decision once taken would never be gone back upon.

To you I confided my most intimate thoughts, to you I brought all my childish doubts. One day I expressed surprise that God does not give an equal amount of glory to all the inhabitants of Heaven—I was afraid that they would not all be quite happy. You sent me to fetch Papa's big tumbler, and putting it beside my tiny thimble, filled both with water and asked me which seemed the fuller. I replied that one was as full as the other; it was impossible to pour more water into either of them, for they could not hold it. In this way you made it clear to me that in Heaven the least of the Blessed does not envy the happiness of the greatest; and by bringing the highest mysteries down to the level of my understanding, you gave my soul the food it required.

Each year I gladly welcomed the prize day. Though I was the only candidate, justice was none the less strictly observed, and I never obtained a reward unless it were well merited. My heart beat fast as I listened to my notes and received the prizes, in presence of the

whole family, from the hands of my "King." To me it was a picture of Judgement Day!

Seeing Papa so cheerful, no suspicion of the great trials awaiting him ever crossed my mind, but one day God showed me, in an extraordinary vision, a striking picture of the trouble in store.

Papa was away from home and was not expected back till late. It would be about two or three o'clock in the afternoon; the sun shone brightly and all Nature seemed at play. I was alone at a window which looked out on the large kitchen garden, my mind full of pleasant thoughts, when I saw in front of the wash-house opposite, a man dressed exactly like Papa, and of the same height and demeanour, though more bent and aged. I say *aged*, to convey an idea of his general appearance, because, the head being covered with a thick veil, I did not see his face. Slowly and with measured steps he advanced, and passed by my own little garden. Overcome by a feeling of supernatural dread I called out loudly and in frightened tones: "Papa, Papa!" The mysterious person seemed not to hear, and continuing on his way without even turning round, went towards a clump of fir-trees which divided in two the garden walk. I expected to see him reappear beyond the tall firs, but the prophetic vision had vanished.

It was all over in a moment, but it was a moment which impressed itself so deeply upon me that even now, after so many years, the memory of it stands out as distinct as the vision itself.

You and Marie were in an adjoining room, and at my cry of "Papa!" you were both seized with fear. Concealing her emotion, Marie ran to me, saying: "Why do you call Papa like that when he is at Alençon?" I described what I had just seen, and to reassure me I was told that the maid must have covered her head with her apron on purpose to frighten me.

When questioned, however, Victoire declared she had not left the kitchen, and besides, the truth was

deeply engraved on my mind: I had seen a man, and that man was exactly like Papa. Together we went to look behind the fir-trees, and finding nothing, you told me to think no more about it. But to banish the thought was impossible. Often and often this mysterious vision rose up before me. Often and often I tried to lift the veil which hid its true meaning, and deep down in my heart lay the conviction that some day it would be fully revealed.

And now you know everything, dear Mother; you know that it was really our darling Father whom God showed me bent with age and bearing on his venerable face and silvery hair the symbol of his terrible trial.[1] As the Adorable Face of Jesus was veiled during His Passion, so it was fitting that the face of His humble servant should be veiled during the days of his humiliation, in order that it might shine with greater brilliance in Heaven. How I admire the ways of God in showing us beforehand this precious cross! Even so does a father's love prompt him both to dwell himself with delight on the treasure he has stored up for his children, and to allow those children to catch a stray glimpse of the glorious future he is preparing.

But the thought comes to my mind: "Why did God give this light to a child, who, if she had understood it, would have died of grief?" Why? Here is one of the incomprehensible mysteries we shall only understand in Heaven, where they will be the subject of our eternal admiration. My God, how good Thou art! How well dost Thou suit the trial to our strength!

At that time I had not the courage to think of the possibility of losing Papa, without feeling terrified. One day when he was at the top of a ladder, and I stood close by, he called out: "Move away, little Queen! if I fall I shall hurt you." But my soul rebelled against

[1] In 1888 M. Martin had several attacks of paralysis, which, after affecting his limbs, left them each in turn, but continued to affect his mind until the end of his life. For a space of three years it was found necessary to entrust him to the care of strangers. [CARMEL.]

the idea, and going still nearer to the ladder I determined that should he fall, I would perish with him and so be spared the pain of seeing him die.

How I loved and admired him! When he expounded to me his ideas on the most serious matters as if I were a grown-up girl, I would say quite artlessly: "It is certain, Papa, that if you spoke like that to the great men who govern the country, they would make you its king, and France would be happier than she has ever been. But you yourself would be unhappy, for such is the lot of kings, and besides, you would no longer be my King alone, so I am glad they do not know you!"

I was between six and seven when I saw the sea for the first time. I could not turn away my eyes: its majesty, the roaring of the waves, the whole vast spectacle impressed me deeply and spoke to my soul of God's power and greatness. While we were on the beach, a gentleman and his wife, after looking at me for a long time, asked Papa if I were his child, and remarked that I was a very pretty little girl. Papa at once made them a sign not to flatter me, but I was pleased to have overheard, for I did not think I was pretty. You had always been most careful to avoid saying anything before me that might in the least way spoil my childlike simplicity. And because of my perfect confidence in you, I attached little importance to these expressions of admiration, and so gave them no further thought.

That same evening, at the hour when the sun seems to sink into the broad expanse of waters, leaving behind it a trail of light, I sat with you on a lonely rock and let my gaze linger on this path of splendour. You described it as an image of grace illumining the way of faithful hearts here upon earth. Then I pictured my own soul as a tiny barque, with graceful white sails, floating in the midst of the golden stream, and I determined never to steer it out of the sight of Jesus, so that it might make its way swiftly and tranquilly towards the Heavenly Shore.

CHAPTER III

PAULINE ENTERS CARMEL

I WAS eight and a half when Léonie left school and I took her place at the Abbey.[1] The girls of my class were all older than I; one of them was fourteen, and, though not at all clever, she knew how to impose on her companions. Seeing me, in spite of my years, nearly always first in class, and a favourite with all the nuns, she became jealous, and paid me out in a thousand ways. Naturally timid and sensitive, I was unable to defend myself, and took refuge in tears. Neither my little Mother nor Céline knew of these troubles, and, as I was not advanced enough in virtue to rise above them, I suffered a great deal.

Fortunately I went home every evening, and then my spirits revived. I would climb on to Papa's knee, telling him what marks I had, and his caresses drove away all my troubles. It was with the greatest delight that I announced the result of my first composition, for I had obtained full marks. In reward I received a silver coin which I dropped into my money-box for the poor, and nearly every Thursday I was able to put in another. Such kindnesses were in my case a real necessity: the Little Flower needed to strike its tender roots deeper and deeper into the dearly loved garden of home, for nowhere else could it find the nourishment it required.

Thursday was a holiday at the Abbey, but it was not like the holiday I had with you at *Les Buissonnets*, when I spent most of my time upstairs with Papa. Not know-

[1] The Benedictine Convent at Lisieux.

ing how to play like the other children, I felt myself a dull companion, and though I tried my best to do as they did, it was always without success.

After Céline, whom I found almost indispensable, I sought the company of my little cousin Marie, because she left me free to choose the games I liked best. Already we were united in closest affection, as if God were showing us beforehand how one day in Carmel we should both embrace the same religious life.[1]

At my uncle's house we often played at being two austere hermits, with only a poor hut, a little patch of corn, and a garden in which to grow a few vegetables. We arranged that while one was attending to active duties the other was engaged in prayer, and thus the hours went by in an unbroken contemplation of divine things. All was gone through in silence with religious gravity and decorum. The make-believe continued even in the street. There the two hermits would say the Rosary, using their fingers to count on, so as not to display their devotion before those who might scoff. One day, however, the hermit Thérèse forgot herself, and made a great sign of the Cross before eating a cake given her for lunch, with the result that some worldly folk smiled.

The desire of always doing the same thing sometimes carried us too far. One evening on our way home from school at the Abbey, we bethought ourselves of imitating the modesty of the hermits. "Lead me," I said to

[1] Marie Guérin entered the Carmel of Lisieux, August 15, 1895, taking the name of Sister Mary of the Eucharist. She was remarkable for her spirit of poverty and her patience through long suffering. "I do not know if I have borne my sufferings well," she said in her last illness, "but it seems as though Thérèse were communicating to me her spirit of self-surrender, and I think her confidence is mine. Oh! if only like her I could die of love! It would not be surprising, since I belong to the legion of little victims she asked of God. Mother, if during my agony you see that my sufferings are preventing me from making acts of love, I beseech you to remind me of my desire. I wish to die saying, 'Jesus, I love Thee!'" This desire was realised. She died on April 14, 1905, being then in her thirty-fifth year, and her last words were: "I do not fear to die! . . . Oh, what peace! . . . We must not dread suffering, for He gives strength . . . My Jesus, I love thee! . . ." [CARMEL.]

Marie, "I am going to shut my eyes." "So am I," came the answer.

Keeping to the pavement, we had nothing to fear from the passing vehicles and for a brief space all went well. But presently we fell over and upset some boxes that stood at a shop door. Out rushed the angry shopkeeper to pick up his goods, while the would-be hermits, scrambling to their feet, made off at full speed. Their eyes were now wide open, and their ears could not shut themselves to the reproaches of Jeanne, the maid, who seemed quite as much vexed as the shopman.

I have not yet told you of my altered relationship with Céline, and how at Lisieux the positions had been reversed. She was now the little romp, full of mischief, while I had become quite a quiet child, and much too inclined to tears. I stood in need of a champion, an office which dear Céline was ever ready to discharge with the utmost intrepidity. At that early age our hearts were simple and unspoiled. They unfolded like spring flowers swayed by the same soft breezes and gladly welcoming the morning dew. It was our delight to make one another little presents; in fact, all our joys were shared in common, as I felt vividly on the happy day of Céline's First Communion.

I was then only seven, and had not as yet begun school at the Abbey. During her last weeks of preparation, you talked with her every evening of the great step she was about to take. In my own eagerness to prepare, I listened to all you said, and my heart was very sore when I was told to go away because I was still too young. Four years, I thought, was not too long a time to spend in making ready to receive Our Lord. One evening I heard someone say to my happy little sister that from the time of her First Communion she ought to begin an entirely new life. I determined to begin with her, without waiting for my First Communion.

During the preliminary retreat she remained as a

boarder at the Abbey. The time seemed to me very long, but at last the great day dawned. What an impression it has left! It was like a foretaste of Our Lord's first entry into my own heart. Many were the graces I received, and I look on it as one of the most beautiful days of my life.

I have gone back a little in order to recall those tender memories, but now I must tell you of the parting that almost broke my heart when Our Lord took you, my little Mother whom I so dearly loved. I told you once I should like to go away with you to a far-off desert, and you replied that you wished it too, and would wait till I should be old enough to set out. I took this impossible promise in earnest, and great was my grief when I overheard you speaking to Marie about your approaching entrance into Carmel. I did not know what this meant, but I quite understood you were leaving us to enter a convent, and that you would not wait for Thérèse.

How can I describe the anguish my heart endured! In a flash I beheld life as it really is, full of suffering and constant partings, and I shed most bitter tears. At that time the joy of sacrifice was still unknown to me. I was so weak, that I look back on it as an immense grace not to have died under a trial which to all appearance was far in excess of my strength.

I shall never forget how tenderly you tried to console me, my little Mother. You explained to your child the nature of the religious life, and one evening, while pondering all alone on the picture you had drawn for me, I felt that Carmel was the desert where God wished me also to hide. I felt it so strongly that there was no room for doubt. It was not the dream of an impressionable child, but the certainty of a divine call, and this sensation, which I am unable to describe, brought with it a wonderful peace. Next day I confided my desires to you, and, seeing in them the working of God's Will, you promised to take me soon to

interview the Mother Prioress that I might tell her my secret.

A Sunday was chosen for this solemn visit, but great was my embarrassment when I heard we were to have the company of our cousin Marie, who was still young enough to be allowed to see the Carmelites.[1] I had then to devise a means of speaking to Mother Prioress alone, and this is what I planned. I told Marie that since we were to have the privilege of seeing Reverend Mother we should be on our best behaviour, and out of politeness should tell her all our little secrets, adding that this would entail our going out of the room in turns. Though Marie did not quite like it, as she had no secrets to confide, she nevertheless accepted the suggestion. In this way I contrived to be alone with Mother Mary of Gonzaga, who listened to my great disclosure, and expressed her belief in my vocation. But she told me postulants[2] were not received at the age of nine; I must wait until I was sixteen. In spite,

[1] Carmelites cannot be seen by the ordinary visitor. A dark cloth covers the parlour grating through which conversation takes place, and it is only removed for near relatives, intending postulants, and young children. [Ed.]

[2] It may be well to explain here, for those unacquainted with the language of the religious life, that a *postulant* is one who asks to be admitted to a Religious Order; the *postulantship* usually lasts from six months to a year and ends with the *clothing*, or ceremony of exchanging the secular for the religious garb. The *novitiate*, a period of prayer rather than of active work, is then begun, continuing for one year or two years. At its close, the *novice* is admitted to *profession*, that is, to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and not unfrequently a fourth vow, such as that of serving the sick, labouring for the poor, working on the foreign missions or the like. In the case of nuns the white veil is on that day exchanged for the black, though, as the reader will note, among the Carmelites the taking of the black veil is a separate ceremony which is performed later. On the occasion of her clothing and profession, a Carmelite wears a crown of roses for the day, in token of her Divine Bridal, and St. Thérèse alludes several times to the custom. Among the Poor Clares, the roses are replaced on the profession day by a crown of thorns. In Carmel, the vows—by which a religious becomes the "*Spouse of Christ*"—are taken straightway for life, but in modern Religious Congregations they are at first made temporarily, then renewed at intervals, and only after several years are they made perpetual.

Contrary to received ideas, the difficulty lies in entering rather than in leaving a convent or monastery, the tests of the vocation to a life of self-sacrifice and of close union with God being necessarily very searching. [Ed.]

therefore, of my eager desire to enter with you, dearest Mother, and make my First Communion on your clothing day, I had to be resigned to the delay.

At last, the second of October came round, a day of tears but also of benediction, when Our Lord gathered the first of His flowers from our garden, the chosen one who later on was to become the Mother of her sisters.

Whilst our beloved Father, together with my uncle and Marie, climbed the mountain of Carmel to offer his first sacrifice, aunt took me to Mass with Léonie and Céline. We were crying bitterly, and as we entered the church the people gazed at us in surprise, but that did not stay the floods of tears, and I even wondered how the sun could go on shining. Perhaps, dear Mother, you may find that I exaggerate my grief, and I admit that this parting ought not to have upset me so much. But my soul was still far from matured. I had yet to weather many a storm before reaching the haven of peace, and before tasting the delicious fruit of perfect love and absolute self-surrender to God's Will.

In the afternoon of the same day, October the second, 1882, I saw you behind the parlour grating of Carmel. My dear Pauline was now Sister Agnes of Jesus. How much I suffered in that parlour! It seems to me that because this is the story of my soul, I ought to tell you everything. I must therefore acknowledge that the first pain of our parting was as nothing when compared with what followed. I, who had been accustomed to perfect freedom of intercourse with my little Mother, heart to heart, could now scarcely snatch two or three minutes with Sister Agnes of Jesus at the end of the family visits.[1] I spent these minutes in tears; then, still in tears, I would come away. I did not realise that it was impossible to give one half-hour to each of us, and that naturally Papa and Marie must have the

[1] The hours during which visits may be made to the parlour are limited by the Rule. [CARMEL.]

largest share. I could not understand this, and my heart cried out: "Pauline is lost to me!"

My mind developed too rapidly under the strain, and I soon fell dangerously ill. It was an illness in which Satan assuredly had a hand. Enraged no doubt at this first entry into Carmel, he wished in his jealousy to avenge himself on me for the grave mischief my family was to do him in the future. He little knew, however, that the Queen of Heaven was keeping a faithful and affectionate watch from above over her Little Flower, and was making ready to still the tempest just as the frail and delicate stem was on the point of breaking.

At the close of the year 1882, I began to suffer from constant headache, but it was bearable and did not prevent me from continuing my studies, until Easter, 1883, when Papa went to Paris with Marie and Léonie, having confided Céline and myself to the care of our uncle and aunt. One evening, while I was alone with my uncle, he spoke so touchingly of Mamma and of bygone days that I was deeply moved and my tears began to flow. My sensitiveness went to his heart, and, surprised that anyone of my age should speak and feel as I did, he determined to do all in his power to divert my mind during the holidays.

But God had ruled otherwise. That very evening my headache became extremely acute, and I was seized with a strange shivering which lasted all night. My aunt, like a real mother, never left me for a moment, and indeed all through my illness she nursed me with the most tender affection.

How shall I describe our poor Father's grief, when he returned from Paris to find me in this hopeless state? Soon he was convinced that I was going to die; but Our Lord might have said to him: "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.*"[1] For God was glorified in our affliction through the wonderful resig-

[1] John xi. 4

nation of our dear Father and sisters, and especially of Marie. How she suffered on my account, and how grateful I am! It was her heart that guided her in forestalling my every need, and truly the wisdom of a motherly heart is far beyond that of the most skilful doctor.

Meanwhile, dear little Mother, your clothing day was drawing near. It was taken for granted that I should not be well enough to attend the ceremony, so, fearing to distress me, no one ever mentioned the matter in my presence. Deep down in my heart, however, I felt that God would on that day vouchsafe me the consolation of being with you again once more. I knew this feast would pass without a cloud, and that Our Lord would not try His spouse by depriving her of the presence of the child whose illness had caused her such sorrow.

And so it fell out. I was able to embrace you, to sit on your knee, to hide myself under your veil, to receive your loving caresses. I feasted my eyes on my dear little Mother, so lovely in her snow-white bridal dress. It was a bright day in a time of dark trial, but the day—or rather the hour—passed all too quickly, and I was soon in the carriage which was to take me away.

On reaching *Les Buissonnets* I was put to bed, though I felt no trace of fatigue. On the morrow, however, I had a serious relapse, and I became so ill that, humanly speaking, there was no hope of recovery. I do not know how to describe this extraordinary illness. I said things which I did not think, and I did things as though I were forced to do them in spite of myself. Most of the time I appeared delirious, and yet I am quite certain I was never for one moment deprived of my reason. Sometimes for hours together I remained in a strange kind of swoon, unable to make the slightest movement, and yet hearing everything that was said around me, even when spoken in a whisper. I remember it all so well.

What fears, too, the devil inspired! Everything frightened me. The bed seemed to be surrounded by awful precipices, and nails in the wall would assume the ghastly appearance of huge, coal-black fingers, filling me with terror and at times making me cry out with fright. Once, whilst Papa stood looking at me in silence, the hat in his hand was suddenly transformed into some horrible shape, and I showed such fear that he turned away sobbing.

But if God allowed the devil to approach in this open way, He also sent His angels of earth to console and to strengthen me. Marie rarely left my side, and, notwithstanding all the trouble I gave, she never once betrayed the least sign of weariness. I could not rest while she was away; and during meals, when Victoire took care of me, I cried continually and never ceased calling "Marie, Marie!" It was only if she were going to Mass or to visit you that I would allow her to leave me. On these occasions I did not complain.

Léonie, too, and my little Céline, could not do enough for me. On Sundays, they would remain for hours shut up with a poor child who seemed almost to have lost her reason. My own dear sisters, how much I made you suffer!

Uncle and aunt were also full of affection, and every day, when my aunt came to see me, she would bring me some little gift.[1] During this illness, my love for these dear ones increased more than I can possibly say, and I understood better than ever what our good Father so

[1] Sœur Thérèse repaid her from Heaven. During Madame Guérin's last illness, she made her presence felt on several occasions. One morning the invalid was found very peaceful and happy:—"I have suffered a great deal," she said, "but Thérèse watched tenderly by me all night. I felt her near my bed, and she encouraged me frequently by her caresses." Madame Guérin had lived a most holy life, and her last words were: "Jesus, I love Thee, I offer Thee my life for Thy priests as did my little Thérèse." She died on February 13, 1900, aged fifty-two.

M. Guérin, who had for many years used his pen in defence of the Church and his fortune in support of good works, also died a holy death, as a Carmelite Tertiary, on September 28, 1909. He was in his sixty-ninth year. [CARMEL.]

often said: "Always remember, children, that your uncle and aunt are devoted to you in quite an exceptional way." In his old age, he himself experienced that devotedness, and now in his turn he will protect and bless those who showed him such care.

In the hours when the pain was less acute, it was my delight to weave garlands of daisies and forget-me-nots for Our Lady's statue. We were then in the lovely month of May, and the earth was adorned with the flowers of Spring. Only the *Little Flower* drooped, and seemed to have faded for ever. But close beside her was a radiant Sun, the miraculous statue of the Queen of Heaven, and towards that glorious Sun the Flower would often turn.

Papa came into my room one morning, evidently in the deepest distress. Going up to Marie, he gave her some gold pieces, and bade her write to Paris for a novena of Masses to be said at the shrine of Our Lady of Victories[1] to obtain the cure of his poor little Queen. His faith and love touched me to the quick, and I longed to get up and tell him I was cured. Alas! my wishes could not work a miracle, and an extraordinary miracle was necessary if I were to be restored to health. But it was wrought, and my recovery made complete, by the intercession of Our Lady of Victories.

One Sunday during the novena Marie went into the garden, leaving me with Léonie who was reading by the window. After a while I began to call in a low voice: "Marie, Marie!" Accustomed to hear me fret in this way, Léonie took no notice, so I called out louder and Marie came back to me. I distinctly saw her enter, but for the first time I failed to recognise her. I looked piteously round the room and towards the garden, crying again and again: "Marie! Marie!" Words cannot convey the agony of that moment, and Marie's

[1] It was in this small church—once deserted and to-day perhaps the most frequented in Paris—that the saintly Abbé Desgenettes was inspired by Our Lady, in 1836, to establish the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners. [ED.]

suffering was perhaps greater than mine. At last, after many fruitless efforts to make me recognise her, she whispered to Léonie and went away, pale and trembling.

A few minutes later, Léonie carried me to the window overlooking the garden, where I could see Marie walking slowly up and down. She held out her arms to me with a smile, and called tenderly: "Thérèse, my little Thérèse!" but still I did not know her. This last effort failing, she returned to my room and knelt in tears at the foot of the bed. Then, looking towards the statue, she implored Our Lady's assistance with all the fervour of a mother who begs the life of her child and will not be refused. Léonie and Céline joined in her prayer, and that cry of faith forced the gates of Heaven.

Utterly exhausted, and finding no help on earth, I too sought my heavenly Mother's aid, and entreated her with all my heart to have pity on me.

Suddenly the statue became animated and radiantly beautiful—with a divine beauty that no words of mine can ever convey. The look upon Our Lady's face was unspeakably kind and sweet and compassionate, but what penetrated to the very depths of my soul was her gracious smile. Instantly all my pain vanished, my eyes filled, and big tears fell silently, tears of purest heavenly joy.

"Our Blessed Lady has come to me, she has smiled on me! How happy I feel! but I shall tell no one, for if I do my happiness will leave me." Then, I looked down and recognised Marie, who was watching me lovingly and seemed overcome with emotion, as though she guessed the great favour I had just received.

It was indeed to her and her earnest prayer I owed that wonderful grace—a smile from the Blessed Virgin. When Marie saw me gaze fixedly on the statue, she said to herself: "Thérèse is cured!"[1] It was true. The

[1] At that moment, her face became as though transfigured. Her whole attitude, as well as her supernatural expression, filled those present with wonder and admiration, leaving no doubt on their minds

Little Flower had come back to life. A bright ray from her glorious Sun had brought warmth and light, and had delivered her for ever from the cruel enemy: "*The dark winter was now passed, the rain was over and gone*,"[1] and Our Lady's Flower gathered such strength that five years later she unfolded her petals on the fertile mountain of Carmel.

Marie, as I have said, was fully convinced that the Blessed Virgin, while restoring my bodily health, had granted me some hidden grace; and when we were alone together, I was unable to resist her tender and pressing enquiries. Astonished to find my secret already known without my having said a word, I told her everything, and, as I had foreseen, my happiness was changed, alas! into sorrow. For four years the remembrance of the great favour caused me real pain, and it was only in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Victories, at my Mother's feet, that once again peace was restored to me in all its fulness, as I will tell you later.

The change came about in this way. After Marie had heard my simple and sincere account of the grace I had received, she begged leave to tell the nuns at Carmel, and I did not like to refuse. My first visit there, after my illness, was one of joy at seeing you, my little Mother, clothed in the habit of Our Lady of Carmel. It was a time of bliss for us both, so intensely had we suffered, but although there was much to say, my heart was too full and I could hardly speak.

Mother Mary of Gonzaga was present, and she gave me many proofs of affection. I saw several other members of the community as well, and all of them, as

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as to what had taken place—Our Blessed Lady had really appeared to Thérèse during those moments of ecstasy.

This statue—referred to on page 29—had already twice appeared as if endowed with life in order to enlighten and console Madame Martin, and was very dear to her and her husband. "La Vierge du Sourire" ("Our Lady of the Smile") now looks down upon the shrine of St. Thérèse. It is a copy, nearly three feet high, of the magnificent Madonna carved by Bouchardon (1698-1762) for the church of St. Sulpice in Paris. [CARMEL.]

[1] Cf. Cant. ii. 11.

you will remember, dear Mother, questioned me on my miraculous cure. Some asked if Our Lady had the Infant Jesus in her arms; others wished to know if Angels were with her. These and further questions troubled and grieved me, and I could only make one answer: "Our Lady looked very beautiful; I saw her come towards me and smile."

Noticing that the nuns thought something quite different had happened, I imagined that I had, perhaps, been guilty of an untruth. Had I only kept my secret, my happiness, too, would have been secure. But Our Lady allowed this trouble to befall me for the good of my soul; without it, vanity might have crept into my heart, whereas now I was humbled, and looked on myself with profound contempt. My God, Thou alone knowest all that I suffered.[1]

[1] This painful trial could only have been the result of a mysterious permission on the part of Almighty God. [CARMEL.]

CHAPTER IV

FIRST COMMUNION

WHILE describing this visit to Carmel, my thoughts are carried back to the first one after you entered. In the course of the morning I had been wondering what name would be given to me later on; I knew there was already a Sister Teresa of Jesus; but I could not bear to lose my beautiful name of Thérèse. Suddenly I thought of the Holy Child to whom I bore such devotion, and I felt how happy I should be if I could be called Teresa of the Child Jesus. I was careful, however, not to tell you of my wish, so what was my surprise and joy at hearing Reverend Mother say: "When you come to us, little one, you will be known as 'Teresa of the Child Jesus.'" This happy coincidence of thought appeared to me as a special mark of favour from the Divine Child.

So far I have said nothing of my predilection for pictures and books, and yet, dearest Mother, I owe some of the best and strongest impressions which have encouraged me in the practice of all that is good, to the beautiful pictures you used to show me. While I looked at them, the hours passed unheeded. "The Little Flower of the Divine Prisoner," for instance, suggested so many thoughts that the sight of it would cast me into a kind of ecstasy. I would offer myself to Our Lord to be His little flower, and I longed to dwell in the shadow of the Tabernacle, like the flower in the picture, consoling Him, being affectionately cared for by Him, finally to be gathered by His hand.

As I was useless at games, I should have preferred to spend all my time reading. Fortunately I had visible guardian angels to guide me in the matter.

They chose for me books that were suitable to my age, interesting, yet providing food for both mind and heart. The time set apart for this, my favourite recreation, was carefully limited, so that it became an occasion of much self-sacrifice, as no sooner had the time elapsed, than I made a point of instantly putting the book down, even in the middle of the most absorbing passage.

With regard to the impressions produced on me by these books, I must frankly own that, in reading certain tales of chivalry, I did not always understand the realities of life; and in my admiration for the patriotic deeds of the heroines of France, especially of the Venerable Joan of Arc, I longed to do what they had done. Then I received what I have always considered one of the greatest graces of my life; for at that age I was not favoured with lights from Heaven as I am now.

Our Lord made me understand that the only true glory is the glory which lasts for ever; and that to attain it there is no necessity to do brilliant deeds; rather should we hide our good works from the eyes of others, and even from ourselves, so that "*the left hand knows not what the right hand does.*"[1] Then, as I reflected that I was born for great things, and sought the means to attain them, it was made known to me interiorly that my personal glory would never reveal itself before the eyes of men, but would consist in becoming a Saint.

This aspiration may very well appear rash, seeing how imperfect I was, and am even now, after so many years of religious life; yet I still feel the same daring confidence that one day I shall become a *great Saint*. I am not trusting in my own merits, for I have none; but I trust in Him who is Virtue and Holiness itself. It is He alone who, pleased with my poor efforts, will raise me to Himself, and by clothing me with His merits make me a Saint. At that time I did not realise

[1] Cf. Matt. vi. 3.

that to become one it is necessary to suffer a great deal; but God soon disclosed this secret to me through the trials I have already related.

To return to my narrative. Three months after my cure, Papa took me away for a change. It was a thoroughly enjoyable time and I began to see something of the world. All around me was joy and gladness; I was petted, made much of, admired—in fact, for a whole fortnight, my path was strewn with flowers. True indeed are these words contained in the Book of Wisdom: "*The bewitching of vanity overturneth the innocent mind.*"[1] At ten years of age, the heart is easily fascinated, and I admit that in my case this kind of life had its charms.

The world knows well how to combine its pleasures with the service of God. How little it thinks of death! And yet death has come to many I knew then—young, rich, and happy. I recall to mind their luxurious homes, and ask myself where they themselves are, and what profit they now derive from the mansions and estates where I saw them enjoying the good things of life. Then I reflect that "*All is vanity*[2] except loving God and serving Him alone."[3] Perhaps Our Lord, before paying His first visit to my soul, wished me to know something of the world, that I might choose with greater deliberation the way in which I should follow Him.

I shall always remember my First Communion Day as one of unclouded happiness. It seems to me that I could not have been better prepared. You remember, dear Mother, the delightful little book[4] you gave me three months before the great event? I found in the much prized manuscript an attractive method which pre-

[1] Wisdom iv. 12. [2] Eccles. i. 2. [3] *Imit.* I, ch. i. 3.

[4] This manuscript of Mother Agnes of Jesus has since been published under the title "Two Months of Preparation for First Communion." The method adopted, which Sœur Thérèse goes on to explain, is still of value, though the age for First Communion has been considerably lowered. [ED.]

pared me gradually and thoroughly. It taught me also that, even though I had been long thinking of my First Communion, I must stir up in my heart fresh transports of love and fill it anew with flowers. Every day, therefore, I made a number of little sacrifices and acts of love which were to be transformed into so many flowers: violets or roses, cornflowers, daisies, or forget-me-nots —in a word, all nature's blossoms were to form within me a cradle for the Holy Child.

Marie had taken your place as my guide, and every evening I spent a long time with her, eager to hear all she had to say. She was so eloquent that her noble and generous spirit seemed to pass into mine. As the warriors of old trained their children in the profession of arms, so she trained me for the battle of life, and roused my ardour by pointing to the victor's glorious palm. She spoke, too, of the imperishable riches which are within our daily reach, and of the folly of trampling treasures under foot, when one need but stoop to gather them.

Often, indeed, I felt sorry that I alone was listening to her wonderful teaching, for in my simplicity I imagined her torrent of eloquence would convert even the most obstinate sinners, with the result that, forsaking the perishable riches of this world, they would seek none but the riches of Heaven.

At this time I should have liked to practise mental prayer, but Marie thought it better I should keep to vocal prayer only, as she considered my piety sufficient for my years. While I was at school at the Abbey, one of the mistresses asked me what I did on holidays when I stayed at home. I answered timidly: "I often hide in a corner of my room, where I can shut myself in with the bed-curtains, and then I think." "But what do you think about?" she said, laughing. "I think about God, about the shortness of life, about eternity—in a word, *I think*." This was not forgotten, and later on my mistress liked to remind me of the time when *I thought*, and

used to ask me if I still continued to do so. . . . It is clear to me now that I was then really engaged in mental prayer under the gentle guidance of my Divine Master.

The three months' preparation for my First Communion passed quickly; the time came for my retreat, and during it I stayed at the Abbey. What days of grace! I do not think such joys can be experienced outside a religious house; the number of children being comparatively small, each one can receive individual care. It is in a spirit of the deepest gratitude that I speak here of the true motherly affection our mistresses showed us; though I do not know why, it was nevertheless plain that they watched over me even more carefully than over my companions.

Every night, the first mistress, her little lamp in hand, softly drew aside my bed curtains and kissed me tenderly. She showed me such affection that, touched by her kindness, I said to her one night: "Mother, I love you so much that I am going to tell you a great secret." I then took from under my pillow the precious book you had given me and handed it to her. She opened it with care, and, looking through it attentively, told me how privileged I was. Several times during the retreat, the truth came home to me that very few motherless children are as affectionately dealt with as I was then.

I followed most closely Father Domin's instructions, taking copious notes. As for my own thoughts, I did not put any of them in writing, for I knew I should remember them quite well. And so it proved.

With what delight I followed the Divine Office, just as the nuns did! I was noticeable among my companions by a large crucifix, which, like the missionaries, I carried in my belt. The crucifix had been given me by Léonie, and it was thought that in wearing it as I did, I was simply imitating my Carmelite sister. And certainly my heart was often in Carmel with my dear little Mother. I knew you were also in retreat, not to prepare for Jesus to give Himself to you, but to make ready to give your-

self entirely to Him, and that on my First Communion Day. This time of quiet waiting was therefore doubly dear to me.

At last there dawned the most beautiful day of all the days of my life. How perfectly I remember even the smallest details of those sacred hours! The joyful awakening, the reverent and tender embraces of my mistresses and older companions, the room filled with white frocks, like so many *snow-flakes*, where each child was dressed in turn, and, above all, our entrance into the chapel and the melody of the morning hymn:

"O Altar of God, where the Angels are hovering."

But I would not, and I could not tell you all. Some things lose their fragrance when exposed to the air, and one's innermost thoughts cannot be translated into earthly words without instantly losing their deep and heavenly meaning. How sweet was the first embrace of Jesus! It was indeed an embrace of love. I felt that I was loved, and I said: "I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee for ever." Jesus asked nothing of me, and claimed no sacrifice; for a long time He and little Thérèse had known and understood one another. That day our meeting was more than simple recognition, it was perfect union. We were no longer two. Thérèse had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of the ocean; Jesus alone remained—He was the Master, the King. Had not Thérèse asked Him to take away the liberty which frightened her? She felt herself so weak and frail, that she wished to be for ever united to the Divine Strength.

And then my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained; tears of happiness welled up and overflowed. My companions were astonished, and asked each other afterwards: "Why did she cry? Had she anything on her conscience? . . . No, it is because she has not her Mother here, or the Carmelite sister of whom she is so fond." And no one understood that all the

joy of Heaven had come down into one heart, and that that heart—exiled, weak, and mortal—could not contain it without tears.

How could our darling Mother's absence grieve me? Since Heaven itself dwelt in my soul, in receiving the visit of Jesus I received one from her as well. Nor were my tears due to your being away, for we were even more closely united than before. No, I repeat it—joy alone, a joy too deep for words, overflowed within me.

In the afternoon, I read the Act of Consecration to Our Lady in the name of all the First Communicants. Probably the choice fell upon me because my own earthly Mother had been taken from me while I was still so young. I put my whole heart into the reading of the prayer, and besought Our Blessed Lady always to watch over me. It seemed to me that she looked down lovingly, and once more smiled on her Little Flower.

I recalled the visible smile which had cured me, and my heart was full of all I now owed her, for it was no other than she who, on that very May morning, had placed in the garden of my soul her Son Jesus—"*the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys.*"[1]

When evening came the little Queen walked hand in hand with Papa to Carmel, where I saw you, my beloved Pauline, now become the spouse of Christ and, like me, wearing a white veil and a crown of roses. My happiness was without alloy, for I hoped soon to join you and at your side to wait for Heaven.

I was not indifferent to the feast prepared at home, and I was charmed with the watch presented to me by Papa. But my joy was a tranquil joy. No exterior thing could interfere with the inward peace of my soul. At last, night fell, bringing to a close that beautiful day. For even the brightest days are followed by darkness; one alone can have no setting—the day of the eternal Communion in our only true Home. The morrow seemed veiled in melancholy. The pretty clothes, the

[1] Cant. ii. 1.

presents I had received, did not satisfy me. Henceforth Our Lord alone could fill my heart, and I longed only for the blissful moment when I should receive Him again.

I made my second Communion on Ascension Day, and I had the pleasure of kneeling at the rails between Papa and Marie. My tears flowed with inexpressible sweetness, while I recalled and repeated again and again the words of St. Paul:—"*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"[1] After the second visit of Our Lord, my one desire was for Holy Communion, which was allowed to me on all the great feasts. Alas! how far apart they seemed!

On the eve of those happy days, Marie helped me to prepare, just as she had done for my First Communion. Once, I remember, she spoke of suffering, and said that in all probability, instead of making me walk by that road, God, in His goodness, would carry me always like a little child. The following day, after Communion, these words came back to me, bringing with them an ardent desire for suffering, as well as a conviction that I should have many a cross to bear. Then a wave of consolation swept over my soul—of such consolation as in all my life I have never known. Suffering became my treasure. I found in it charms that held me spell-bound, though as yet I did not appreciate it to the full.

I had one other great wish: to love God only and to find my joy in Him alone. During my thanksgiving after Holy Communion, I often repeated this passage from the *Imitation of Christ:* "O my God, who art unspeakable sweetness, turn for me into bitterness all the consolations of earth."[2] These words rose to my lips naturally. I said them like a child who, without quite understanding, repeats what a friend may suggest. Later on, dear Mother, I will tell you how Our Lord has been pleased to fulfil my desire; how He, and He alone, has always been my joy. Were I to speak of it

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

[2] *Imit.* III., ch. xxvi. 3.

now, I should have to pass on to my girlhood, and there is still much to tell you of my earlier days.

Soon after my First Communion, I went into retreat again to prepare for Confirmation. It was with the greatest care that I made ready for the coming of the Holy Ghost, and I could not understand how anyone could do otherwise before receiving this Sacrament of Love.[1]

For some reason the ceremony was delayed, so I had the consolation of having my retreat prolonged. How happy I felt! Like the Apostles, I looked with joy for the promised Comforter, gladdened by the thought that I should soon be a perfect Christian, and have the holy Cross, the symbol of that wondrous Sacrament, traced upon my forehead for all eternity.

I did not feel the mighty wind of the first Pentecost, but rather the *gentle breeze* which the prophet Elias heard on Mount Horeb. On that day I received the gift of fortitude in suffering—a gift I needed sorely, for the martyrdom of my soul was soon to begin.

When these sweet and memorable feasts were over, I had to resume my life as a day pupil at the Abbey. I made good progress with my lessons, and remembered quite easily the sense of what I read; but I found the greatest difficulty in learning by heart, and indeed it was only at catechism my efforts were ever crowned with success. The chaplain called me his little "Doctor of Theology,"[2] no doubt because of my name Thérèse.

During recreation I frequently gave myself up to serious thoughts, while from a distance I watched my companions at play: in fact this was my favourite occupation. Another one, which gave me real pleasure, was to pick up the little dead birds that had fallen from the

[1] Speaking to Céline, during this retreat, of the manner in which the Holy Ghost takes possession of the soul, her words were so inflamed, and her look became suddenly so ardent, that her sister, unable to endure it, lowered her eyes and withdrew, filled with a sense of the supernatural she never forgot (*Spirit of St. Thérèse*). [ED.]

[2] St. Teresa of Avila is called the Doctor of Mystical Theology, because of her writings on the relations of the soul with God. [ED.]

trees, and bury them in a special plot apart. At times, too, I told stories to my companions, and even the big girls came to listen, but my career as an orator was, wisely, soon brought to an end by the interference of our mistress, who wished us just then to exercise our bodies rather than our brains.

About this time, I chose as friends two little girls of my own age. But how shallow are the hearts of creatures! It happened that for some reason one of them had to remain at home for several months. While she was away I thought of her very often, and on her return showed great pleasure at seeing her again. All I met with, however, was a glance of indifference—my friendship was not appreciated. I felt this very keenly, and I no longer sought an affection which had proved so inconstant. Nevertheless, I still love my little school friend and I pray for her; God has given me a faithful heart, and when once I love, I love for ever.

Observing that some of the girls were very devoted to one or other of the mistresses, I tried to imitate them, but never succeeded in winning special favour. Happy failure, from how many evils have you not saved me! I am most thankful to Our Lord that He has allowed me to find only bitterness in earthly friendships. With a heart such as mine I should so easily have been taken captive and had my wings clipped. How then should I have been able to "*fly away and be at rest*"?[1] How can a heart given up to human affection be closely united to God? It appears to me impossible. I have seen so many souls who, having been allured like poor moths by this treacherous light, fly into the flame and burn their wings, then return injured to Our Lord, the Divine Fire which burns and does not consume.

I know well that Jesus saw I was too weak to be exposed to temptation, for without doubt had my eyes been dazzled by the deceitful light of creatures, I should have been utterly lost. There, where strong souls find

[1] Ps. liv. 7.

joy, and are faithful in practising detachment, I found only bitterness. No merit, then, is due to me for not having let myself be bound by false ties, since by God's sweet mercy alone was I preserved from them. Too well do I realise that without Him I might have fallen as low as St. Mary Magdalen, and the great words of the Divine Master to Simon the Pharisee re-echo with much sweetness in my soul. I know that "*to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less*,"[1] but I know, too, that Our Lord has forgiven me even more than He forgave St. Mary Magdalen. I wish it were possible to say all that I feel, but here is an example which will convey to you some idea of what I mean.

Let us suppose that the son of a very clever doctor, stumbling over a stone on the road, falls and breaks his leg. His father hastens to his aid, and binds up the fractured limb with all the skill at his command. When cured, the son shows the utmost gratitude—and with good reason.

But, on the other hand, suppose that the father, knowing that a large stone lies on his son's path, anticipates the danger, and, unseen by anyone, hastens to remove it. Unconscious of the accident from which such tender forethought has saved him, the son will not show any mark of gratitude for it, or feel the same love for his father as he would have done had he been cured of some grievous wound. But if he came to learn the whole truth, would he not love his father all the more?

Well now, I am this child, the object of the foreseeing love of a Father "*Who did not send His Son to call the just, but sinners.*"[2] He wishes me to love Him because He has forgiven me, not much, but everything. Without waiting for me to love Him much, as St. Mary Magdalen did, He has made me understand how He has loved me with an ineffable love and forethought, in order that my own love may reach *even unto folly*. I have often heard it said, both in retreats and elsewhere, that

[1] Luke vii. 47. [2] Luke v. 32.

an innocent soul has never loved more than a repentant one. Ah, if I could but give the lie to those words!

But I have wandered so far from my subject that I scarcely know where to begin again. . . . It was during the retreat before my second Communion that I fell a prey to scruples, and I remained in this unhappy state for nearly two years. It is not possible for me to describe all the sufferings it entailed; one must have passed through such a martyrdom to be able to understand it. Every thought, every action, even the simplest, was a source of trouble and anguish; no peace came to me till I told everything to Marie, and that cost me a great deal, for I imagined myself obliged to lay open absolutely all my thoughts, even the most extravagant. This done, I experienced a momentary peace, but it passed like a flash and once again the martyrdom began. Dear Marie, with how many occasions for patience did I not furnish you?

That year we spent a fortnight of our holidays at the sea-side. My aunt, ever ready to give proof of her motherly love, treated us to all manner of amusements—donkey rides, shrimping, and so on. She indulged us also in the matter of clothes: once, I remember, she gave me some pale blue ribbon and, in spite of my twelve and a half years, I was such a child that I quite enjoyed tying it on my hair. But even this childish pleasure filled me with scruples, and I could not rest till I had been to confession.

During our stay at Trouville, I had a salutary lesson. Cousin Marie frequently had sick headaches, and on these occasions my aunt used to fondle her and call her the most endearing names. The only response, however, was continual tears and the ceaseless complaint: "My head aches!" Though I had a headache nearly every day, I made no complaint. But one evening I was seized with a desire to imitate Marie, and throwing myself into an arm-chair in a corner of the room, I began to cry. Cousin Jeanne, to whom I was very devoted, was soon

at my side, and my aunt, too, was all anxiety to know what was the matter. Like Marie, I only answered: "My head aches!" Apparently, complaining was a part which did not suit me, for I failed to convince anyone that a headache was the real cause of my tears. Therefore, instead of pitying me as she usually did, aunt spoke to me very seriously. Jeanne went so far as to reproach me, kindly, it is true, but evidently grieved at my lack of simplicity, and want of confidence in my aunt, for she was convinced that my tears were caused by some scruple which I was unwilling to make known. Getting nothing for my pains, I made up my mind never again to imitate other people, and I now understood the fable of the ass and the little dog. I was the ass who, seeing all the petting bestowed on the dog, put his clumsy hoof on the table to try and secure his share. If, unlike the poor animal, I escaped a sound beating, I received at any rate what I deserved—a severe lesson which cured me once and for all of the desire to attract attention.

I must now return to the subject of my scruples. They made me so ill that I had to be taken from school when I was thirteen. To complete my education, Papa took me several times a week to a very competent teacher, whose lessons served the purpose not only of instructing me, but also of bringing me into contact with the outside world.

Visitors were often shown into the quaintly furnished room where I sat surrounded with my books, and though conversation was carried on, as far as possible, by my governess's mother, I did not succeed in learning much while the visit lasted. Though seemingly absorbed in my work, little escaped my attention, even of what it would have been far better I should not hear. One visitor remarked on my beautiful hair; another enquired, as she left the room, who was the pretty little girl? Such remarks, all the more flattering because I was not meant to hear them, left

a certain feeling of pleasure which clearly proved that I was full of self-love.

How great is my compassion for souls that perish! It is so easy to go astray along the world's seductive paths. Without doubt the sweetness which it offers to one somewhat advanced in virtue is always mingled with bitterness, nor can the immense void of such a soul's desires be filled by the flattery of a moment; but in my case, had not my heart been lifted up to God from its first awakening, had the world smiled on me from the cradle, there is no knowing what I might have become. How gratefully then, dearest Mother, do I sing "*the Mercies of the Lord*"! Has He not, according to the words of Holy Wisdom, "*taken me away from the world lest wickedness should alter my understanding, or deceit beguile my soul*"?[1]

Meanwhile, I resolved to consecrate myself in a special way to Our Blessed Lady, and therefore I sought admission into the Sodality of the Children of Mary.[2] For this it was necessary to go twice a week to the convent, but I was so shy that I must admit it cost me an effort. I certainly had a great love for my mistresses, and I shall always retain a strong feeling of gratitude towards them, but, as I have already said, unlike other old pupils, I had no special friend among them with whom I might have spent several hours. So I worked on in silence till the end of the sewing lesson, and then, as no one took any notice of me, I went to the tribune in the chapel and waited there until Papa came to take me home.

Here, in this quiet visit, I found my one consolation. Was not Jesus my only friend? To Him alone could I open my heart. All conversation with creatures, even on holy subjects, wearied me. True, I sometimes felt sad because of the indifference shown me, but I

[1] Cf. Wisdom iv. 11.
[2] She became a Sodalist of Our Lady, May 31, 1886. [Ed.]

would console myself by repeating this line from a beautiful poem Papa often recited for us:

"Time is thy barque and not thy home."

Young as I was, these words restored my courage, and even now, though I have outgrown many of the pious impressions of childhood, the symbol of a ship always delights me, and helps me to bear with my exile. Does not the Wise Man tell us: "*Life is like a ship that passeth through the waves; when it is gone, the trace thereof cannot be found*"?[1]

When my thoughts turn this way they soon lose themselves in the infinite. I seem already to touch the heavenly shore, and to feel Our Lord's loving embrace. In my fancy, I can see Our Blessed Lady coming towards me, Papa and Mamma by her side, and in their company those four little angels, our baby brothers and sisters. Then at last I taste, as in a dream, the true and unending joys of Home.

But before reaching our Heavenly Father's Home, I had many separations to endure upon earth. The same year in which I was made a Child of Mary, Our Lady took from me my dearest Marie,[2] the only support of my soul. Since the time of your entering Carmel she had been my spiritual guide, and I loved her so deeply that I could not bear to be deprived of her gentle companionship.

I no sooner heard of her determination than I resolved to take no further interest in anything here below, and I shed abundant tears. But tears at that time were nothing unusual; they flowed for the most trivial cause. I was most anxious, for instance, to advance in virtue, yet I went about it in a strange way. I had never been accustomed to wait on myself, or do any house work, and Céline always arranged our room.

[1] Wisdom v. 10.

[2] Marie entered the Carmel of Lisieux on October 15, 1886, taking the name of Sister Mary of the Sacret Heart. [CARMEL.]

Now, however, with the intention of pleasing Our Lord, I would sometimes make my bed, or, if Céline happened to be out, I would bring in her plants and cuttings. Since it was for Our Lord's sake that I did these little things I ought not to have looked for any return. But, alas! I did look for thanks, and if, unfortunately, Céline did not seem surprised and grateful for my small services, I was disappointed, as my tears soon showed.

Again, if I unintentionally offended anyone, far from making the best of it, I fretted until I became quite ill, thus increasing my fault instead of repairing it. Then when I began to be reconciled to the blunder, I would cry for having cried. In fact, I made troubles out of everything. But all this has come to an end. The favours God has showered upon me have wrought a complete change and I am no longer the same. Thanks to grace from above, transitory things cannot depress me, and as my thoughts revert to what I used to be, my heart overflows with gratitude.

Marie having entered Carmel, I could not tell her of my scruples, so I turned towards Heaven and confided them to the four little angels who had gone before me. I thought that these innocent souls, who had never known either sorrow or fear, ought to have pity on their poor little suffering sister. I talked to them with childish simplicity, and told them that as I was the youngest of the family, I had always been the most petted and loved by my parents and sisters, and that if they too had remained on earth they would no doubt have given me the same proofs of affection. I told them also that the fact of their being in Heaven was no reason why they should forget me. On the contrary, since they could draw from the treasury of Heaven, they ought to obtain for me the grace of peace, and so prove that in Paradise they loved me still.

I had not long to wait for the answer: a sweet peace soon inundated my soul and I knew that I was loved,

not only on earth but also in Heaven. From that day my devotion towards those blessed ones increased; I loved to talk to them, to tell them of all the sorrows of this exile, and of my great longing to join them soon in our Eternal Home.

CHAPTER V

VOCATION OF THÉRÈSE

I WAS far from meriting the graces showered upon me by Our Lord. I had a constant and ardent desire to advance in virtue, but how numerous were the imperfections that were mingled with my acts! My extreme sensitiveness made me almost unbearable, and all arguments against it were simply useless; I could not correct myself of this miserable failing.

How then could I dare hope to be soon admitted into Carmel, since nothing short of a miracle was needed if my childish ways were to be altered? But God wrought the desired miracle on December 25, 1886. On that blessed Christmas night, the sweet Infant Jesus, scarce yet an hour old, flooded with His glorious sunshine the darkness into which my soul was plunged. In becoming weak and little for love of me, He made me strong and brave, He placed His own weapons in my hands, and I went from victory to victory, beginning, so to speak, "*to run as a giant.*"[1] The fountain of my tears was dried up, and from that time they flowed neither easily nor often.

I must tell you here, dear Mother, the circumstances under which I received the priceless grace of my complete conversion. On reaching home, after midnight Mass, I knew I should find my shoes in the chimney-corner, filled with presents, just as when I was a little child, a fact which proves that I was still treated as a baby. Papa loved to watch my enjoyment, and to hear my cries of delight as I drew each fresh surprise from the magic shoes, and his pleasure added considerably to mine.

[1] Cf. Ps. xviii. 5.

But the hour had come when Our Lord desired to free me from the failings of my childhood, and take from me even its innocent pleasures. He permitted that Papa, instead of indulging me in his usual way, should feel annoyed, and as I went upstairs I overheard him say: "All this is far too babyish for a big girl like Thérèse, and I hope this is the last time it will happen." These words cut me to the very heart, and Céline, knowing how sensitive I was, whispered: "Don't go down just yet, you would only cry if you looked at your presents before Papa." But Thérèse was no longer the same—Jesus had transformed her. Choking back my tears, I ran down to the dining room, and making every effort to still the throbbing of my heart, I picked up my shoes and gaily drew out the presents one by one, looking all the time as happy as a queen. Papa joined in the laughter and there no longer appeared on his face the least sign of vexation. Céline thought she must be dreaming, but happily it was a sweet reality, and Thérèse had once for all regained the strength of mind which had left her when she was four and a half.

On this radiant night began the third period of my life, the most beautiful of all, the most filled with heavenly favours. Satisfied with my good-will, Our Lord accomplished in an instant the work I had not been able to do during years. Like the Apostles, I might have said: "*Master, we have laboured all night and have taken nothing!*"[1] More merciful to me than to His beloved disciples, Jesus Himself took the net, and casting it, drew it out full of fishes: He made me *a fisher of men.* Love and a spirit of self-forgetfulness took complete possession of my heart, and thenceforward I was perfectly happy.

One Sunday, on closing my book at the end of Mass, a picture of the crucifixion slipped partly out, showing one of the Divine Hands, pierced and bleeding. An indescribable thrill, such as I had never before experi-

[1] Luke v. 5

enced, passed through me; my heart was torn with grief at the sight of the Precious Blood falling to the ground, with no one caring to treasure it as it fell. At once I resolved to remain continuously in spirit at the foot of the Cross, that I might receive the divine dew of salvation and pour it forth upon souls.

From that day, the cry of my dying Saviour: "*I thirst!*" resounded incessantly in my heart, kindling within it new fires of zeal. To give my Beloved to drink was my constant desire; I was consumed with an insatiable thirst for souls, and I longed at any cost to snatch them from the everlasting flames of hell.

In order to enkindle my ardour still further, Our Divine Master showed me how pleasing to Him was my zeal. About this time, I heard people speak of a notorious criminal, Pranzini, who had been condemned to death for several horrible murders. He was impenitent, and in consequence it was feared he would be eternally lost. Longing to avert that greatest of misfortunes, a calamity beyond all repair, I employed all the spiritual means I could think of to obtain the ransom of this poor sinner; and knowing that of myself I could do nothing, I offered up the infinite merits of Our Saviour together with the treasures of Holy Church.

In the depths of my heart I felt convinced my request would be granted, but, that I might gain courage to persevere in the quest for souls, I said in all simplicity: "My God, I am sure Thou wilt pardon this unhappy Pranzini, and I shall still think so even if he does not confess his sins or give any sign of sorrow—such is the confidence I have in Thy unbounded mercy. But, because this is my first sinner, I beg for just one *sign* of repentance to reassure me."

My prayer was granted to the letter. Though Papa never allowed us to read newspapers, I did not consider it an act of disobedience when, on the day following the execution, I hastily opened the paper, *La Croix*, and looked for the part concerning Pranzini. What was it

I saw? . . . Tears betrayed my emotion and I was obliged to run from the room. Without confession or absolution Pranzini had mounted the scaffold, and the executioners were dragging him towards the fatal block, when all at once, apparently in answer to a sudden inspiration, he turned round, seized a crucifix which the priest held towards him, *and kissed Our Lord's Sacred Wounds three times!* . . .

I had obtained the desired sign, and it came with special sweetness, for was it not the sight of the Precious Blood, flowing from the Wounds of Jesus, which had fired me with that great thirst for souls? I had longed to give them to drink of the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, that it might wash away their stains, and lo! the lips of " my first-born " had been pressed to those Divine Wounds. How touching was the answer from Heaven!

After this answer to prayer, my desire for the salvation of souls increased day by day. I seemed to hear Our Lord whispering to me as He did to the Samaritan woman: "*Give Me to drink.*"[1] It was truly an exchange of love: I poured out the Precious Blood of Jesus upon souls, and that I might quench His thirst, I offered to Jesus these same souls refreshed with the dew of Calvary. But the more I gave Him to drink, the greater became the thirst of my own poor soul, and this was indeed my most precious reward.

In a short while, God in His goodness had lifted me out of the narrow sphere in which I lived, and the great step was taken. But a long road lay before me. Freed, however, from scruples and over-sensitiveness, my mind expanded, and as I was always a lover of the noble and beautiful, I developed about this time a passionate desire for learning. Not satisfied with the lessons of my mistress, I took up certain subjects by myself and in a few months learned more than I had done in my whole school-life. But was not this zeal—"*vanity and vexation of spirit*"?[2] I was now at the most dangerous time

[1] John iv. 7. [2] Eccles. i. 14.

of my life, and with my impetuous nature I should have run grave risk were it not that God wrought on my behalf what Ezechiel describes in his prophecy:

"*Behold thy time was the time of lovers: and I spread My garment over thee. And I swore to thee, and I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine. And I washed thee with water and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee with fine garments, and put a chain about thy neck. Thou didst eat fine flour and honey and oil, and wast made exceedingly beautiful, and wast advanced to be a queen.*"[1]

All this Our Lord has done for me. I might take each word of that striking passage, apply it to myself, and show how completely it has been realised in me, but you have sufficient proof in the graces I have already recorded, so that I shall only speak now of the abundant food provided for me by my Divine Master. For a long time I had sustained my spiritual life on the "*fine flour*" contained in the *Imitation of Christ*. It was the only book from which I derived any good, because as yet I had not discovered the treasures hidden in the Holy Gospels. I always carried it about with me, much to the amusement of those at home, and my aunt would often open it, making me repeat the first chapter upon which she chanced to light.

When I was fourteen, my thirst for knowledge grew so keen that God thought fit to add honey and oil to the fine flour, and this honey and oil I found in the conferences of Father Arminjon on *The End of this World and the Mysteries of the World to Come*. While reading them, my soul was steeped in a joy that was not of earth; I experienced a foretaste of what Our Father has prepared for those who love Him, and understanding how far eternal rewards exceed the petty sacrifices of this life, I yearned to love God passionately, and, while it still lay in my power, to prove that love in countless ways.

[1] Ezechiel xvi. 8, 9, 13.

Since Christmas especially, Céline had become the most intimate sharer of my thoughts. Our Lord, wishing us to advance in virtue together, drew us to each other by ties stronger than blood. He made us sisters in spirit as well as in the flesh, and in us were realised the words of our holy Father, St. John of the Cross:

> Treading in Thy footsteps
> Young maidens lightly run upon the way.
> From the spark's contact,
> And the spicèd wine,
> They give forth aspirations of a balm divine.

Truly it was with light hearts that we followed in the footsteps of Jesus. The burning sparks which He cast into our souls, the strong wine which He gave us to drink, made us blind to all earthly things, and from our lips broke forth aspirations all fragrant with love.

What tender memories are awakened as I think of the intercourse of those days! Every evening, from our wide attic window, we gazed at the azure vault studded with golden stars, and it seems to me that in those moments many precious graces were bestowed upon us. "God," says the author of the *Imitation*, "communicates Himself sometimes amid great light, at other times sweetly veiled under signs and figures."[1] In this latter way He deigned to manifest Himself to our hearts; but how light and transparent was the veil! Doubt was no longer possible: Faith and Hope had already given place to Love—Love which made us find even upon earth Him whom we sought. And when He found us alone—"*He gave us His kiss and now no one may despise us.*"[2]

These divine impressions could not but bear fruit, and the practice of virtue gradually became sweet and natural to me. In the beginning my looks betrayed the effort, but little by little self-sacrifice grew easy, even from the very first call. Our Lord has said: "*To*

[1] Cf. *Imit.* III, ch. xlii. 4.

[2] Cf. Cant. vii. 1.

everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall abound."[1] Each grace faithfully received brought in its train many others. He gave Himself to me in Holy Communion more frequently than I dared hope, for I had made it a rule to receive Him as often as my confessor would allow, though never to solicit any further leave. Now, however, I should act very differently: I am quite certain that a soul ought to make known to her spiritual guide the longing she has to receive her God. It is not to remain in a golden ciborium that He comes down from Heaven each day, but to seek another Heaven—the Heaven of our souls wherein He takes such delight.

To satisfy my desires, Our Lord inspired my confessor to permit me to receive Holy Communion several times weekly, and this permission coming, as it did, straight from Him, filled me with joy. In those days I did not dare to speak of my intimate feelings; the road I trod was so direct, so clear, that I did not feel the need of any other guide but Jesus. I compared directors to mirrors that faithfully reflect Our Saviour to the souls under their care, and I thought that in my case He used no intermediary, but acted directly.

When a gardener gives special attention to a fruit which he wishes to ripen early, it is never with a view to leaving it on the tree, but rather placing it on a well-spread table. In the same way did our Lord lavish His favours on His Little Flower, for He, who while on earth cried out in a transport of joy:—"*I bless Thee, O Father, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones,*"[2] willed that His mercies should shine forth in her. And because I was small and frail, He deigned to stoop down to me and instruct me gently in the secrets of His love.

As St. John of the Cross sings in his *Canticle of the Soul:*

[1] Luke xix. 26.

[2] Cf. Luke x. 21.

Vocation of Thérèse

On that happy night
In secret I went forth, beheld by none,
And seeing naught;
Having no light nor guide
Excepting that which burned within my heart,
Which lit my way
More safely than the glare of noon-day sun
To where, expectant,
He waited for me who doth know me well,
Where none appeared but He.

This place was Carmel, but before I could "*sit down under His shadow whom I desired*,"[1] I had to pass through many a trial. And yet the divine call was becoming so insistent that had it been necessary for me to go through fire to follow Our Lord, I should have cast myself into the flames.

You, and you alone, encouraged me in my vocation; in your loving heart mine found a faithful echo, and without you I should never have reached the blessed haven which, already for five years, had sheltered my little Mother. For five years we had been kept apart; you had seemed as though lost to me, but now, in the hour of trial, it was your hand that showed me the path I should follow, and assuredly I was in sore need of this consolation. My visits to the convent were becoming more and more distressing, for I could not speak of my desire to enter without encountering opposition. Marie, considering me too young, did all that was possible to thwart my plans; in fact, from the very beginning, there were obstacles at every turn. Besides, I feared to tell Céline, and that tortured me. It was so hard to have a secret she did not share. However, she soon found out my intention, and, far from striving to hold me back, accepted the sacrifice with wonderful courage. She, too, wished to be a nun, and was entitled to go first, but imitating the martyrs of old who used to embrace joyfully those chosen to go before them into

[1] Cant. ii. 3.

the arena, she willingly allowed me to leave her, and took my troubles as much to heart as though it had been a question of her own vocation.

From Céline then I had nothing to fear, but I did not know how to speak to Papa. How could I ask him to part with his little Queen, when he had already made the sacrifice of his two eldest daughters? Moreover, that year he had been stricken with a serious attack of paralysis, and though he had recovered quickly we were full of anxiety for the future.

What struggles I went through before I could decide! But I had to act promptly, for I was now fourteen and a half. In six months' time the blessed feast of Christmas would be here, and I had resolved to enter Carmel at the same hour at which, a year before, I had received the grace to overcome my childish failings, the hour of my complete conversion.

I chose the feast of Pentecost on which to make my great disclosure. All day I prayed for light from the Holy Ghost. I called upon the Apostles to plead for me, and begged them to inspire me with the words I ought to use. Were they not the very Saints to help a timid child whom God destined to become an apostle of apostles by prayer and sacrifice?

In the afternoon, on our return from Vespers, I found the opportunity I so much desired. Papa had gone into the garden, and was sitting there, with hands clasped, admiring the wonders of nature. The birds were warbling their evening prayer, and the crimson rays of the setting sun still lingered on the tall trees.

His face wore a heavenly expression—I could feel that his soul was full of peace. Without saying a word, I sat down by his side, my eyes already wet with tears. He looked at me with indescribable tenderness, and, pressing me to his heart, said: "What is it, little Queen? Tell me . . ." Then as if to hide his own emotion, he rose and walked slowly up and down, still holding me close to him.

Through my tears I spoke of Carmel and of my great wish to enter soon. He too, wept, but did not say one word to turn me from my vocation; he simply pointed out to me that I was still very young to decide on so grave a matter. I insisted, urgently pleading my cause, and because of his upright, generous nature, our noble Father soon yielded. For a long time we continued our walk in the garden; my heart was relieved, and Papa no longer shed tears. He spoke to me just as a Saint might have spoken, and showed me some little white flowers, like miniature lilies, which were growing on a low stone wall. Picking one, he gave it to me, and remarked with what loving care God had brought it to bloom and preserved it until that day.

I thought I was listening to my own life story, so close was the resemblance between the little flower and little Thérèse. I received it as a relic, and I noticed that in trying to pluck the slender blossom, Papa had pulled it up by the roots: it seemed destined to live on, but in other and more fertile soil. He had just done the same thing for me, by permitting me to leave the sweet valley of my childhood's years for the mountain of Carmel. I fastened my little white flower to a picture of Our Lady of Victories, so that the Blessed Virgin smiles upon it and the Infant Jesus seems to hold it in His hand. It is there still, but the stalk is now broken close to the root. No doubt God wishes me to understand by this that He will soon sever all the earthly ties of His Little Flower, and will not leave her to fade here below.

Having secured Papa's consent, I thought I could fly to Carmel without further hindrance. To my dismay, however, when I confided the secret to my uncle, he declared that to enter such a severe order at the age of fifteen seemed contrary to all human prudence, adding, moreover, that it would be doing a wrong to religion to let a mere child embrace such a life. He said that he would oppose it in every possible way, and

that nothing short of a miracle would induce him to change his mind. I clearly saw that all arguments were useless, and I left him, my heart overwhelmed with grief. My only consolation lay in prayer, and I entreated Our Lord to work the miracle of which my uncle had spoken, for thus only could I respond to His divine call. Some time elapsed, and apparently my uncle had forgotten our interview, though later I learned it had been constantly in his thoughts.

Before sending a ray of hope to shine on my soul, God allowed me to pass through a three days' martyrdom of another and most grievous kind. Never before had I so well understood the bitter sorrow of Our Lady and St. Joseph as they walked through the streets of Jerusalem in search of the Divine Child. It was as if I were lost in some fearful desert; or rather my soul seemed like a frail skiff, without a pilot, left to the mercy of the stormy waters. I knew that Jesus was there, asleep in my boat, but how could I see Him through a night of such darkness? Had the storm really broken, a flash of lightning might have pierced the clouds that hung over me, enabling me to catch a momentary glimpse of the Beloved of my heart, but even that was denied me. All around was night, dark night, utter desolation, death! Like my Divine Master in Gethsemani, I felt that I was alone, and that I could find no comfort, neither on earth nor in heaven.

Even Nature seemed to share my deep sadness, for during those three days there was not one ray of sunshine and the rain fell in torrents. Again and again I have noticed that, all through my life, Nature has reflected my feelings. When I wept, the heavens wept with me; when I rejoiced, no cloud darkened the azure sky. On the fourth day, a Saturday, I went to see my uncle, and what was my surprise to find his attitude towards me completely changed! First of all he brought me quite spontaneously into his private study; then, after gently reproaching me for being somewhat

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St. Thérèse with her Father

reserved towards him, he told me that the miracle he had exacted was no longer necessary. He had prayed to God to guide his heart aright, and the prayer had been heard. Indeed I scarcely knew my uncle, so sympathetic had he become. After embracing me like a father, he said with deep feeling: "Go in peace, dear child, you are a privileged little flower which Our Lord wishes to gather for Himself; I will no longer put any obstacle in your way."

How joyfully I retraced my steps homeward under a beautiful sky whence every cloud had vanished! In my soul, too, dark night was gone; I no longer heard the roar of the waves—Jesus had awakened to gladden my heart. Instead of an adverse wind a light breeze swelled my sails and I thought myself safe in port. But alas! more than one such storm was yet to arise, making me fear lest I should be driven, without hope of return, from the shore I so longed to reach.

Scarcely had I obtained my uncle's approval when you, yourself, told me the Superior of the Carmel[1] would not allow me to enter till I was twenty-one. No one had dreamt of this opposition, the hardest of all to overcome, yet without losing courage I went with Papa to lay my request before him. He received me very coldly. Nothing would induce him to change his mind, and we left him with a very emphatic "No." "Of course," he added, "I am only the Bishop's delegate; should he allow you to enter, I shall have nothing to say."

When we came out of the presbytery it was once more raining in torrents, and my soul, too, was overcast with heavy clouds. Papa was at a loss to know how to console me. He promised that, if I wished it, I should go with him to Bayeux,[2] and I gladly accepted. Many things, however, happened before we were able

[1] Canon Delatroëtte, parish priest of St. Jacques. He was a man of lively faith, but narrow and unbending in his views. [ED.]

[2] To interview Mgr. Hugonin, the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, who lived at Bayeux. [ED.]

to undertake the journey. Meanwhile, to all outward appearances, my life continued as before. I went on studying—more important still, I went on growing in the love of God—and now and then I experienced what were indeed raptures of spiritual joy.

One evening, not knowing in what words to tell Jesus how much I loved Him, and how much I wished that He might be everywhere honoured and served, the sad thought forced itself upon my mind that from the depths of hell there would never go up to Him one single act of love. From my inmost heart I then cried out that I would gladly be cast into that place of torment and blasphemy to make Him eternally loved even there. Of course this could not be for His glory, since He desires only our happiness, but love must needs speak foolishly. And though I spoke thus, I coveted Heaven most eagerly; nevertheless Heaven for me meant nothing but *love*, and in my ardour I felt I could not be separated from the Divine Being who held me captive.

It was about this time that Our Lord gave me the consolation of gaining a more intimate knowledge of the souls of children. It happened in the following way. During the illness of a poor woman, I interested myself in her two little girls, the elder of whom was scarcely six. It was a real pleasure to see with what simplicity they believed all I told them. Baptism must indeed plant deeply in our hearts the theological virtues, since the hope of heavenly joys is strong enough to make us practise self-denial even from our earliest childhood. When I wanted the two little girls to be kind to one another, instead of promising toys and sweets, I talked to them about the eternal reward the Holy Child Jesus would give to good children. The elder one, who was coming to the use of reason, would look quite pleased and ask me charming questions about the little Jesus and His beautiful Heaven. She promised me faithfully always to yield to her younger sister, adding

that all through her life she would never forget what I had taught her. I used to compare those innocent souls to soft wax, ready to receive any impression—evil, alas! as well as good, and I understood the words of Our Lord: "*It were better to be thrown into the sea than to scandalise one of these little ones.*"[1]

How many souls might attain great sanctity if only they were directed aright from the first! I know that God has no need of anyone to help him in His work of sanctification, but just as He allows a clever gardener to cultivate rare and delicate plants, providing him with the necessary skill to accomplish it, while reserving to Himself the task of making them grow, so also does He wish to be helped in the divine cultivation of souls. What would happen if an ignorant gardener did not properly graft his trees? What if he endeavoured, without understanding the nature of each, to grow roses on peach trees?

This reminds me that among my birds I had a canary which sang beautifully, and also a tiny linnet of which I was specially fond, having adopted it straight from the nest. The little prisoner, deprived of the teaching it should have received from its parents, and hearing from morning till night the joyous trills of the canary, tried one day to imitate them. No easy task indeed for a linnet! It was delightful to follow the efforts of the poor little thing, for its sweet voice found great difficulty in accommodating itself to the vibrant notes of its master; but to my great surprise the linnet's song became in time exactly like the song of the canary.

Dear Mother, you know who taught me to sing from the days of my earliest childhood. You know the voices which drew me on. And in spite of my weakness, I trust it may be granted to me to sing through eternity the Canticle of Love of which the harmonious notes have here below so often fallen on my ear.

But where am I? These thoughts have carried me

[1] Cf. Matt. xviii. 6.

far from my subject. I must resume the history of my vocation.

Together with Papa I set out for Bayeux on October 31, 1887. My heart was full of hope, mingled with excitement at the thought of calling at His Lordship's house. For the first time in my life I was going to pay a visit without any of my sisters, and this to a Bishop. I, who had never yet had to speak except to answer questions addressed to me, would have to explain and enlarge on my reasons for wishing to enter Carmel, and so give proof of the genuineness of my vocation. It cost me a great effort to overcome my shyness sufficiently for this, yet it is true that Love knows no such word as "impossible," but believes "it may and can do all things."[1] I had to purchase my happiness by heavy trials, and nothing but the love of Jesus could have made me face these hardships, as well as the many others which followed. To-day, without doubt, I look upon them as insignificant, and were not the happiness already mine, to win it I would willingly pay the price a thousand times over.

When we reached the Bishop's house, the flood-gates of Heaven seemed to have opened afresh. The Vicar-General, Father Révérony, who had arranged the date of our visit, received us very kindly, though he looked a little surprised. Noticing tears in my eyes, he said: "Ah! those diamonds! they must not be shown to His Lordship!"

We passed through reception rooms so large that I felt like some tiny ant, and I wondered all the while what I should dare to say. The Bishop was walking in a corridor with two priests. I saw the Vicar-General exchange some words with him, and together they came into the room where we were waiting. A bright fire was burning on the hearth, in front of which were three enormous armchairs.

As His Lordship entered, Papa and I knelt for his

[1] Cf. *Imit.*, ch. III, v. 4.

blessing, after which he signed for us to sit down. Father Révérony directed me to the armchair in the middle; I excused myself politely but he insisted, telling me to show if I knew how to obey, so I took it without further remark. I was mortified, however, to see him take an ordinary chair while I was buried in an enormous seat that would have held quite comfortably four children like myself—more comfortably, in fact, for I was far from being at ease. I had hoped that Papa would speak, but instead of this, he bade me explain the object of our visit. I did so as eloquently as I knew how, conscious all the time that one word from the Superior would have carried more weight than all I could say, while his opposition told strongly against me.

The Bishop asked me if it were long since I had wished to enter Carmel. "A very long time, my Lord," I replied. "Come!" said the Vicar-General, laughing, "it certainly cannot be fifteen years." "That is true," I answered, "but there are not very many years to subtract, for I have wished to give myself to God from the time I was three."

The Bishop, no doubt to please Papa, tried to make me understand that I ought to remain at home some time longer. To his surprise and edification Papa took my part, adding, in the most courteous way, that we were going to Rome with the diocesan pilgrimage, and that if I failed to obtain the desired permission before then, I should not hesitate to speak to the Holy Father.

It was decided, however, that before giving an answer it would be necessary to interview the Superior of the Carmel. This, of course, was particularly unpleasant news, for I knew only too well his declared and determined opposition, and in spite of the Vicar-General's advice not to allow any "diamonds" to be seen, I not only showed my tears but let them fall. The Bishop seemed touched, and treated me with the most paternal kindness, greater kindness, I was afterwards told, than he had ever displayed to any child. "All is not lost,

little one," he said, "but I am very glad you are going to Rome with your good Father; it will strengthen your vocation, and, instead of weeping, you ought to rejoice. Next week I shall be at Lisieux and I will talk to the Superior about you. You shall certainly have my answer while you are in Italy."

His Lordship next took us to the garden, and he was much interested when Papa told him that, to make myself look older, I had put up my hair for the first time that very morning. Nor was the incident forgotten, for even now, when the Bishop speaks to anyone about his "little daughter," he always repeats the story of her hair. I own that I would rather it had been left untold. As the Vicar-General accompanied us to the door, he remarked that such a thing had never yet been seen—a father as anxious to give his child to God as the child was to offer herself.

We had then to return to Lisieux without any favourable answer. It seemed to me as though my future were for ever shattered, for the nearer I drew to the goal, the greater my difficulties became. Yet all the time, deep down in my heart reigned a wondrous peace, because I knew I was seeking only God's Will.

CHAPTER VI

A PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

THREE days after the journey to Bayeux, I set out on another and a much longer one, our pilgrimage to the Eternal City. Though it taught me the hollowness of all things that pass away, I saw splendid monuments; I studied the countless wonders of art and religion; and better than all, I stood on the very soil trodden by the Apostles and bedewed with the blood of Martyrs, and my soul grew strong by contact with those holy things.

I am delighted to have visited Rome, but I can quite understand people believing that Papa undertook this pilgrimage with a view to altering my ideas on the religious life. It might well have injured a vocation less firmly established.

To begin with, Céline and I found ourselves in the company of people of rank; indeed there were few others amongst the pilgrims. Far from being dazzled, nevertheless, by any such splendour, we looked on all those exalted titles but as a "vapour of smoke."[1] I understood the words of the *Imitation:* "Be not solicitous for the shadow of a great name,"[2] and I realised that true greatness is not found in a name but in the soul. The Prophet Isaias tells us: "*The Lord shall call His servants by another name;*"[3] and we read in St. John: "*To him that overcometh I will give a white counter, and on the counter a new name written which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.*"[4] In the next world, therefore, we shall know our titles of nobility, and "*then shall every man have praise from God,*"[5] and he who upon

[1] Joel ii. 19. [2] *Imit.*, ch. III. xxiv. 2. [3] Isa. lxv. 15.
[4] Apoc. ii. 17. [5] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

earth chose for love of his Saviour to be the poorest and least known, will be the first, the noblest, and the richest in Heaven.

The second piece of knowledge I acquired concerned God's Priests. Up to this time I could not understand the chief aim of the Carmelite Reform. The thought of praying for sinners afforded me the utmost delight, but I was surprised at the idea of praying for priests, whose souls I deemed purer than crystal. In Italy, I understood my vocation, and the long journey was well worth undertaking to gain such useful knowledge.

During that month I met many holy priests. Yet I saw that despite the sublime dignity of the Priesthood which raises them above the Angels, they still remain men and subject to human frailty. Now if those whom Our Lord in the Gospel calls "*the salt of the earth*"—if holy priests have need of our prayers, what must be the needs of the lukewarm? Has not Our Lord said also: "*If the salt lose its savour wherewith shall it be salted*"?[1]

Dear Mother, how beautiful is our vocation! We Carmelites are called upon to preserve "*the salt of the earth*," to offer our prayers and sacrifices for the apostles of the Lord, to be their apostles, while they by word and example are preaching the Gospel to our brethren. Have we not a noble mission to fulfil? But I must say no more on this subject, or my pen would run on for ever. It is time to return to the journey. Let me describe it for you more in detail.

On the morning of November 4, while Lisieux lay shrouded in the darkness of night we passed through her silent streets. I felt that I was going out into the unknown, that great things were awaiting me in the Eternal City. When we reached Paris, Papa took us to see all its wonders, but for me the sole attraction was the church of Our Lady of Victories. I can never tell you what I felt at her shrine; the graces she granted me there

[1] Matt. v. 13.

were like those of my First Communion Day, and I was filled with happiness and peace. In this holy spot the Blessed Virgin, my Mother, told me plainly it was really she who had smiled on me and cured me. With intense fervour, I entreated her to guard me always, to realise my heart's desire by sheltering me under her spotless mantle, and to remove from me every occasion of sin.

I was well aware that throughout the pilgrimage I should come across things that might disturb me, and having no knowledge of evil, I feared to discover it. As yet I had not experienced that "*to the pure all things are pure*"[1]—that a simple and upright soul does not see evil in anything, since evil exists only in impure hearts and not in inanimate objects. From my childhood, devotion to St. Joseph had been interwoven with my love for Our Blessed Lady, so I prayed to him also that he might watch over me. Each day I said the prayer beginning: "St. Joseph, Father and Protector of Virgins." Under such patronage, I felt quite sheltered from harm.

On November 7, after our solemn consecration to the Sacred Heart in the Basilica of Montmartre,[2] we quitted Paris. Each compartment of the train was named after a Saint, the selection being made in honour of some priest who was among the occupants—his own patron or that of his parish being chosen. But in the presence of all the pilgrims, our compartment was named after St. Martin! Deeply touched by the compliment, Papa at once went to thank the director of the pilgrimage, Mgr. Legoux, Vicar-General of Coutances. From this incident, he was afterwards often called Monsieur St. Martin.

[1] Tit. i. 15.

[2] Montmartre—the "Mount of Martyrs"—is the hill on which St. Denis, Apostle and Bishop of Paris, was martyred with his two companions, in the third century. It was a famous place of pilgrimage in medieval times, and it was here that St. Ignatius and the first Jesuits took their vows. Under the Presidency of Marshal MacMahon, the erection of the well-known Basilica was voted in 1873 by the French Chamber of Deputies, as a national Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart. [ED.]

Father Révérony observed me narrowly; I could see that he was doing so, even from a distance. At table, if I were not sitting opposite to him, he would bend forward so as to see and hear me better, and I think he was satisfied with his observations, since towards the end of the journey he seemed more favourably disposed. I say towards the end, for in Rome, as I will tell you shortly, he was far from being my advocate.

Before reaching the goal of our pilgrimage, we had to pass through Switzerland, with its lofty mountains, whose snowy peaks are lost in the clouds, its rushing torrents, its deep valleys with their luxuriant growths of giant ferns and purple heather.

Dear Mother, what good all those marvellous beauties of nature did to my soul, lifting it up to God, who has lavished such masterpieces on our earth, though it is merely a land of exile destined to endure but a day! Now we were high up the mountain side, while at our feet a yawning abyss seemed ready to engulf us: a little later we were passing through some charming village with its cottages and graceful belfry, over which fleecy clouds floated lazily. Farther on, the calm, clear waters of a great lake would blend their azure tints with the glories of the setting sun.

I cannot tell you how much I was impressed with all this pageant so full of poetry and grandeur, a foretaste of the wonders of Heaven. Then there rose before me a picture of the religious life as it really is, with its constraints and its small daily sacrifices made in secret, and I understood how easy it would be to become wrapt up in self, and to forget the sublime end of one's vocation. "Later on," I thought, "when the time of trial comes—when I am enclosed in Carmel and shall be able to see but a little space of sky—I will recall this day and it will encourage me. I will make light of my own small troubles by thinking of the greatness and majesty of God; I will give my heart to Him alone and avoid the misfortune of attaching myself to fleeting trifles, now

that I have had a glimpse of what is reserved for those who love Him."

Having contemplated the works of God, I turned to admire those of His creatures. The first Italian city we visited was Milan. Its white marble Cathedral, adorned with statues numerous enough to form a small town, furnished us with matter for much careful study. Leaving the more timid members of the party, whose nerve failed them after a short climb, Céline and I followed the bolder pilgrims, and on reaching the top could enjoy a far-reaching view of the city lying beneath us. On descending from those giddy heights, we began a series of carriage drives which lasted through the whole pilgrimage, curing me for ever of all desire for such a lazy style of locomotion.

The "Campo Santo"[1] filled us with rapture. The whole vast enclosure is covered with marble statues so exquisitely carved as to make one fancy that the chisel of genius has actually imparted life. The apparent negligence with which these wonders of art are everywhere scattered is but an additional charm. Their expression, too, so perfectly portrays a calm and Christian sorrow, that one is almost tempted to console them. Here it is a child throwing flowers on its father's grave, and as the delicate petals seem to fall through its fingers, the solid nature of the marble is forgotten. Elsewhere, a widow's light veil, and the ribbons that bind some young maiden's tresses, appear to float at the bidding of the breeze.

We were at a loss for words to express our admiration, when an elderly gentleman, French like ourselves, who followed us everywhere, regretting no doubt his inability to share our sentiments, said ill-humouredly: "What enthusiasts these French people are!" The poor man would, I think, have done better to have stayed at home. Far from enjoying the journey, he was for ever grumbling; nothing pleased him, neither cities, hotels, people, nor anything else. Papa, whose disposition was the

[1] Cemetery.

exact opposite, and who was quite happy no matter what the circumstances were, tried to cheer his disagreeable neighbour, offering him his place in the carriage or elsewhere, and with his wonted kindness encouraging him to look on the bright side of things. But all to no purpose—nothing would make him contented. How many different types of people we saw, and how interesting is the study of the world when one is about to leave it!

In Venice, the scene was completely changed. Instead of the bustle of a large town, there was a stillness only broken by the soft lapping of the waters mingled with the cries of the gondolier as he gracefully plied his oar. Assuredly it is a city of great charm, but likewise of sadness. Even the Palace of the Doges with all its splendours is affected by this spirit of melancholy. We passed through halls, the vaulted roofs of which have long ceased to re-echo the Governor's voice giving sentence of life or death. Unhappy prisoners no longer pine in the dark dungeons that are like living tombs.

While visiting their dreadful cells I transported myself to the days of the Martyrs. Most gladly would I have dwelt in those sombre abodes had there been question of confessing my faith. But presently the guide's voice roused me from my reverie and I crossed the "Bridge of Sighs," so called because of the sighs uttered by the poor prisoners as they passed from their dungeons to death.

After leaving Venice, we visited Padua and there venerated the relic of St. Antony's tongue; then Bologna, where rests St. Catherine's body, the face still bearing the impress of the kiss bestowed upon her by the Infant Saviour.

Joy filled my heart as we went towards Loreto.[1] Our

[1] When Acre fell in 1291, Palestine passed completely into the hands of the Saracens, but, on May 10, the house where God became man and where the Holy Family spent so many years, was transported by angels to Tersato, in Illyria. Three years later, it was carried across the Adriatic to the province of Ancona, in Italy, where after further journeys it was set down finally in the middle of the road at Loreto, in 1295. Such is the tradition, and it has been accredited by many

Lady has chosen a truly ideal place for her Holy House. There everything is poor, simple, and primitive: the women still wear the graceful dress of the country and have not, as in other towns, adopted the modern Paris fashions. Everything enchanted me. But of the Holy House itself what can I say? Emotion overwhelmed me when I realised that I was indeed beneath the very roof which had sheltered the Holy Family, that I was gazing on the same walls upon which Our Lord's divine eyes must have rested, and was treading the ground once moistened by the sweat of St. Joseph's toil. I saw the little chamber of the Annunciation, where the Blessed Virgin so often bore Jesus in her arms, after having borne Him there in her virginal womb. I even put my rosary into the bowl used by the Holy Child. How sweet are all these memories!

But our greatest joy was that of receiving Our Lord in His own house, and so becoming His living temples on the actual spot which He had honoured with His Divine Presence while on earth. According to Roman custom, the Blessed Sacrament is reserved at one altar in each church, and there only is it given to the faithful. At Loreto this altar is in the Basilica—a church built round the Holy House, and enclosing it as a casket of white marble might enclose a diamond of great price. But this did not satisfy us, for it was in the *diamond* and not in the casket that we wished to receive the Bread of Angels. With his wonted meekness, Papa followed the other pilgrims while his daughters, less easily pleased, went toward the *Santa Casa*, or Holy House.

We found that a priest was about to have the privilege of celebrating Mass there, and on our telling him of our great wish he immediately asked for two hosts, which he placed on the paten. You can imagine, dear Mother,

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Popes and Saints and strengthened by miracles. A strong defence of it will be found in *The Holy House of Loreto*, by Bishop Macdonald, of Victoria, B.C. (New York, 1913). The Basilica is the work of the famous Bramante. [ED.]

the ineffable joy of that Communion, joy which no words can express. What then will it be when we shall communicate eternally in the dwelling of the King of Heaven, when our happiness shall never draw to an end or be dimmed by the grief of a farewell? There will be no need there to covet, as we did, fragments from the walls hallowed by the Divine Presence, for His house will be ours throughout all eternity. He will not give us His earthly home, He only shows it to us to make us love poverty and the hidden life. That which He reserves for us is the palace of His glory, where we shall no longer see Him veiled under the form of a little child or the appearance of bread and wine, but as He is, in the brightness of His infinite beauty.

Now I must speak of Rome, where I thought to find comfort, but where I found the cross. It was night when we arrived, and I was awakened from my sleep by the porters calling "*Roma!*" With enthusiasm the pilgrims caught up the cry, repeating "*Roma, Roma!*" Then I knew it was no dream. I was really in Rome.

Our first, and perhaps the most enjoyable, day was spent outside the walls, where everything retains the stamp of antiquity, whilst, on the contrary, in the heart of Rome, with its hotels and shops, it would be easy to suppose oneself in Paris. That drive through the Roman Campagna has left a most pleasing impression on my mind.

How can I describe the feelings which thrilled me as I gazed on the Coliseum? At last, my eyes beheld the arena where so many martyrs had shed their blood for Christ. My first impulse was to stoop and kiss the ground hallowed by their glorious combats—but what a disappointment! The soil having been raised, the real arena now lies buried at a depth of about twenty-six feet. As the result of excavations, the centre part was nothing but one great mass of rubbish to which all entrance was rendered impossible by an insurmountable barrier, but in any case no one dared penetrate into the midst of

those dangerous ruins. Was it possible, however, to be in Rome and not go down to the real Coliseum? That was out of the question. So I paid scant attention to the guide's explanations, one thought only filled my mind—I must reach the arena.

We are told in the Gospel that St. Mary Magdalen remained close to the Sepulchre and stooping constantly to look in was at last rewarded by seeing two Angels. Like her, I also kept stooping and I saw, not two Angels, but that of which I was in search. A cry of joy escaped me and calling to Céline I told her to follow. We sprang forward together, scrambling over the ruins, which crumbled under our feet. In vain did Papa, astounded at our boldness, call loudly to us. We did not hear.

As the warriors of old felt their courage grow in the face of peril, so did our joy increase in proportion to the fatigue and danger we had to face before reaching the goal of our desires. With more foresight than I, Céline had listened to the guide, and she remembered he had mentioned a particular stone marked with a cross as showing the spot where the martyrs had fought the good fight. She set to work to find it, and having succeeded, we knelt together on that sacred ground, our souls united in one and the same prayer. My heart beat violently when I pressed my lips to the dust once reddened with the blood of the early Christians. And as I begged for the grace to be also a martyr for Jesus, I felt a deep conviction that my prayer was heard.

All this took but a short time, and after collecting a few stones we approached the walls to begin once more our perilous climb. So great was our happiness that Papa had not the heart to scold us; I could see that he was even proud of the daring we had displayed.

From the Coliseum we went to the Catacombs where Céline and I laid ourselves down in what had once been St. Cecilia's tomb, and we also carried away some of the earth sanctified by her holy remains. Before my journey

to Rome I had not felt any special devotion to this Saint; but on visiting the house where she was martyred, and on hearing her proclaimed "Queen of harmony" because of the sweet song she sang in her heart to her Divine Spouse, I felt more than devotion to her, I felt real love as for a friend.

She became my chosen patroness as well as the keeper of my most intimate thoughts, for what appealed to me above all else was her perfect abandonment to God and her unbounded confidence in Him—virtues that enabled her to purify souls which till then had never desired any but earthly joys. St. Cecilia is like the Spouse in the Canticles and in her I find the Scriptural "*choir in an armed camp.*"[1] Her life was one of melodious song in the midst of terrible trials, but this is not to be wondered at, since we read that "the Book of the Holy Gospels lay ever on her heart,"[2] while in her heart reposed the Spouse of Virgins.

Our visit to the Church of St. Agnes was also a sweet experience, and there I found a friend of my childhood. At first I was unsuccessful in my endeavour to procure you some little relic, dear Mother, but, when men refused me, God Himself came to my aid, for there fell at my feet a fragment of red marble from an ancient mosaic dating back to the time of the gentle Martyr. Was it not touching that St. Agnes herself should give me a keepsake from her house?

We spent six days visiting the chief wonders of Rome, and on the seventh we saw the greatest of all—Leo XIII. I longed for and yet I dreaded that day, since on it depended my vocation. No answer had come from the Bishop of Bayeux, and now my one and only hope lay in the Holy Father's permission. But to obtain that permission I should have to ask it, and I trembled at the mere thought of daring to address the Pope in the presence of many Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals.

It was on Sunday morning, November 20, that we

[1] Cf. Cant. vii. 1.

[2] Office of St. Cecilia.

went to the Vatican, and at eight o'clock we assisted at the Pope's Mass in his own private chapel. His saintly bearing at the altar gave abundant evidence that the Vicar of Christ was in very truth the "Holy Father."

In the Gospel for that day there occurred these consoling words: "*Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom.*"[1] My heart became filled with confidence. All my fears departed, and in their place was awakened a firm hope that the Kingdom of Carmel would soon be mine. I did not think just then of the other words of Our Lord: "*I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a Kingdom.*"[2] That is to say, I hold in reserve for you crosses and trials, and through them you will become worthy to possess My Kingdom. "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?*"[3] "*If you desire to sit on His right hand, you must drink the chalice which He Himself has drunk.*"[4]

The Holy Father's Mass was followed by a Mass of thanksgiving, and then the audience began. Leo XIII, wearing a cassock and cape of white, was seated on a dais, while round him were grouped various dignitaries of the Church. According to custom, each visitor, kneeling in turn and kissing, first the foot[5] and then the hand of the Sovereign Pontiff, finally received his blessing. At this moment, two of the Noble Guard placed their hands on the pilgrim's shoulder as a sign to rise and pass on to the adjoining hall, thus leaving the way clear for the next.

No one uttered a word, but I was firmly determined to speak, when suddenly the Vicar-General of Bayeux, Father Révérony, who was standing to the right of His Holiness, announced in a loud voice that *he absolutely*

[1] Luke xii. 32.
[2] Luke xxii. 32.
[3] Luke xxii. 29.
[4] Cf. Matt. xx. 22.
[5] The pilgrims kissed a cross embroidered on the shoe. Pius X, it may be remarked, abandoned this ancient custom. At the audiences for the beatification and canonisation of St. Thérèse, Pius XI passed among the kneeling pilgrims giving them his ring to kiss and, in many cases, adding a kindly word. [Ed.]

forbade anyone to address the Holy Father. On hearing this my heart beat wildly as if it would break, and I looked for counsel to Céline, who whispered: "*Speak!*"

The next moment I was on my knees before the Pope. After I had kissed his foot he extended his hand, and then, raising my eyes, which were blinded with tears, I said imploringly: "Holy Father, I have a great favour to ask of you." At once he bent down towards me until his head almost touched my own, while his piercing black eyes seemed to read my very soul. "Holy Father," I repeated, "in honour of your jubilee, allow me to enter Carmel at the age of fifteen."

Surprised and displeased, the Vicar-General said quickly: "Holy Father, this is a child who desires to become a Carmelite, and the superiors of the Carmel are looking into the matter." "Well, my child," said His Holiness, "do whatever the superiors may decide." Clasping my hands and resting them on his knee, I made one last effort: "Holy Father, if only you were to say 'Yes,' everyone else would be willing."

He looked fixedly at me, and said clearly, each syllable strongly emphasised: "Well, child! well, you will enter if it be God's Will!" Once again I was going to plead, when two of the Noble Guard bade me rise; seeing, however, that the request was of no avail, and that my hands remained resting on the knees of His Holiness, they took me by the arms, and, with the help of Father Révérony, lifted me to my feet. Just as I was being thus forced to move, the dear Holy Father placed his hand gently on my lips, then, raising it, blessed me, while his eyes followed me as I turned away.

Papa was deeply distressed to see me coming from the audience in tears; he had passed out before me and so knew nothing of what had happened. To him, personally, the Vicar-General had shown unusual kindness, presenting him to the Sovereign Pontiff as the father of two Carmelites, and the Pope, as a special sign of benevolence, had placed his hand on Papa's head, appearing to

mark him with a mysterious seal in the name of Christ Himself. Now that this father of *four* Carmelites is in Heaven, it is no longer the hand of Christ's Vicar which rests on his brow, prophesying his martyrdom: it is the hand of the Spouse of Virgins, the King of Heaven; and never again will the divine hand be removed from the head it has crowned with such glory.

My sorrow was indeed crushing. Nevertheless my soul remained in peace, inasmuch as I had done all that lay in my power to respond to my Divine Master's appeal. But the peace dwelt only in the depths; on the surface all was troubled, and Jesus seemed absent rather than silent, so hidden was He from view.

That day again the sun did not dare shine, and the beautiful Italian sky, now veiled with heavy clouds, mingled its tears unceasingly with mine. All was over! . . . My journey had failed in its purpose and for me had no further charms. And yet the Holy Father's last words should have consoled me—were they not truly prophetic? Despite all obstacles, God's Will has been done. He has not allowed creatures to do their will, but His.

For some time past I had offered myself to the Child Jesus, to be His little plaything; I told Him not to treat me like one of those precious toys which children only look at and dare not touch, but rather as a little ball of no value that could be thrown on the ground, tossed about, *pierced*, left in a corner, or pressed to His heart, just as it might please Him. In a word, all I desired was to amuse the Holy Child, to let Him play with me just as He felt inclined.

My prayer had been heard. In Rome, Jesus *pierced* His little plaything, anxious, no doubt, to see what it contained. Then, satisfied with what He found, He let the ball drop and went to sleep. What was He doing throughout His sweet slumber, and what became of the toy He had cast aside? Jesus dreamed that He was still at play; that He took up the ball, or threw it down, or

else rolled it far away; but that finally He pressed it to His heart and never again allowed it to slip from His hand. You can imagine, dear Mother, the desolation of the little ball as it lay neglected on the ground! Yet it continued to hope against hope.

Shortly after the fateful 20th of November, Papa went to call on Brother Simeon, founder and director of St. Joseph's College. There he met Father Révérony, whom he gently reproached for not having helped me through my difficult undertaking. Papa told the whole story to Brother Simeon, and the kind old man showed considerable interest in the matter, even going so far as to make notes about it. In conclusion, he remarked with emotion: "Such a thing would not happen in Italy."

On the day following that ever memorable morning of the audience, we started for Naples and Pompeii; Vesuvius did us the honour of emitting from its crater a thick volume of smoke accompanied by numerous loud reports. The traces of devastation over Pompeii are terrifying, and furnish a most striking proof of God's power: "*He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble; He toucheth the mountains and they smoke.*"[1] I should have liked to wander alone among its ruins, pondering on the instability of all things human, but such solitude was not to be thought of.

During our stay at Naples we went for a magnificent drive to the monastery of San Martino, which stands on the crest of a high hill overlooking the whole city. On our way back to the hotel the horses took the bit between their teeth, and it is solely to our Guardian Angels that I attribute our safe arrival at the splendid hotel. The epithet is not too strong. During the pilgrimage we stayed at the grandest hotels, and I, certainly, had never been surrounded by such princely luxury. Yet how true is the saying: Wealth does not make happiness! I should have been a thousand times more contented under a thatched roof with the hope of entering Carmel, than

[1] Ps. ciii. 32.

I was amid marble staircases, gilded ceilings, and silken hangings, with my heart full of woe. I thoroughly realised that joy is not found in the things that surround us, but lives only in the soul, and that it may be possessed just as easily in an obscure prison as in the palace of a King. As a proof, I am now happier in Carmel, amid trials within and without, than I was in the world, where I had everything I needed, even to the sweet joys of an ideal home.

Although my heart was heavy, outwardly I was the same as usual, for I was under the impression that no one had any knowledge of my petition to the Pope; but I was mistaken. On one occasion, when most of the pilgrims had gone to the refreshment-room and Céline and I were alone, Mgr. Legoux came to the door of our carriage. After carefully scrutinising me, he said with a smile: "Well, how is our little Carmelite?" I understood by this that my secret was known to the pilgrims, which fact was indeed further emphasised by the looks of sympathy I received—but happily no one spoke to me on the subject.

While at Assisi, visiting the place sanctified by St. Francis and St. Clare, I had a little adventure, thanks to having lost the buckle of my belt in the monastery. Some time elapsed before I was able to find it and put it on again, with the result that, when I reached the door, all the carriages had gone with the exception of one, and that one belonged to the Vicar-General of Bayeux! Should I try to catch one of those already out of sight and risk losing the train, or should I beg for a seat in Father Révérony's carriage? I decided on the latter and wiser plan.

My embarrassment was extreme, but I did my best to hide it and at the same time to explain my dilemma. He was now in a difficulty also, for every seat was already occupied, but the problem was quickly solved by one of the occupants giving me his place, and taking a seat beside the driver. I felt like a squirrel caught in a snare,

and sat ill-at-ease in the midst of these important people, face to face, as it happened, with the most formidable of them all. Father Révérony was extremely kind, however, and every now and then interrupted his conversation to talk with me about Carmel, and to tell me that he would leave nothing undone towards helping me to enter when I was fifteen. This promise was as balm to my wounds, even though it did not put an end to all suffering. Having lost trust in creatures, it was on God alone I could lean.

Yet my distress did not hinder me from taking a deep interest in the holy places we visited. In the choir of the Carmelite church in Florence we saw the shrine of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, and all the pilgrims were anxious that their rosaries should touch the Saint's tomb. My hand being the only one small enough to pass through the grating, I was deputed for this important and rather lengthy task, which I accomplished with pride and delight. This was not the first time I had been so favoured. At *Santa Croce*, in Rome, when we venerated the relics of the True Cross, together with two of the Thorns and one of the Sacred Nails, I longed to examine them more closely. For this purpose I remained behind, and when the monk in charge was going to replace them on the altar, I asked if I might touch the precious treasures. He was quite willing, though doubtful whether I should succeed. I managed, however, to slip my little finger through one of the openings of the reliquary and was able to touch the Sacred Nail once bathed by the Blood of Our Saviour. It is easy to see that I behaved towards Our Lord like a child who looks on its Father's treasures as its own, and thinks it may do with them as it pleases.

After passing through Pisa and Genoa, we returned to France by one of the loveliest routes. Along part of the line we skirted the sea, and one day, as the result of a storm, the waves rose so high that it seemed as if the water might easily reach us. Farther on, we travelled

through stretches of plain covered with orange trees, olives, and feathery palms. Then, as night fell, the numerous seaports became ablaze with lights, while the stars crept out and shone tremulously in the dark blue sky. Yet it was without regret that I watched this fairy picture fade from my eyes, for my heart was set elsewhere.

Meanwhile Papa was proposing to take me to Jerusalem, but although my natural inclination drew me to visit the places sanctified by Our Lord's footsteps, I was weary of earthly pilgrimages. I longed only for the beauties of Heaven, and it was to win them for souls that I pined to become a prisoner as quickly as possible. Alas! before the gates of my hallowed prison should open, I knew that I must continue to struggle and suffer; yet my trust in God did not grow less, and I still hoped to enter at Christmas.

Scarcely had we reached home when I went to the convent. What an interview that was! You will remember, dear Mother, how I left myself entirely in your hands, for my own resources were completely exhausted. You told me to write to the Bishop and remind him of his promise. I did so at once, and no sooner was the letter posted than I felt I should obtain the necessary permission without any further waiting; but each day brought a fresh disappointment. When the beautiful feast of Christmas dawned, Jesus was still sleeping. He had left His little ball on the ground without even glancing at it.

The trial was a sore one, but He whose Heart is ever watching taught me that He works miracles for those whose faith is as a grain of mustard seed, in hope of thereby strengthening it; whilst for His intimate friends, for His Mother even, He did not work wonders until He had put their faith to the test. Did He not permit that Lazarus should die, even though Mary and Martha had sent word that he was sick? And at the marriage feast of Cana, when Our Lady asked her Divine Son to

aid the master of the house, did He not answer that His hour had not yet come? But after the trial what a reward! Water was changed into wine, and Lazarus rose from the dead. In like manner did my Beloved act with His little Thérèse—having tried her long and often, He granted all her desires.

For my New Year's gift in 1888, Jesus again gave me His cross. Mother Mary of Gonzaga wrote to tell me that on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, she had received the Bishop's answer authorising my immediate entry into Carmel, but that she herself had decided not to open its doors to me until after Lent. At the thought of such a long delay I could not restrain my tears: the dove had been released from her earthly ties only to find that the Ark itself refused to shelter her.[1]

The three months of waiting were fruitful in sufferings, and still more so in other graces. At first indeed the thought came to me to throw off restraint and lead a life less strict than usual. But Our Lord made me understand how valuable those months were, and I resolved to give myself up more than ever to a serious and mortified life. When I say mortified, I do not allude to the penances practised by the Saints. Far from resembling those heroic souls who from their childhood use fast and scourge and chain to discipline the flesh, I made my mortifications consist simply in checking my self-will, keeping back an impatient answer, rendering a small service in a quiet way, and a hundred other similar things. By means of these trifles I prepared myself to become the spouse of Christ, and I can never tell you, dear Mother, how much the enforced delay helped me to grow in self-abandonment, humility, and other virtues.

[1] One reason was the persistent opposition of the superior, Canon Delatroëtte, a cross which lasted for three years. The Canon was very angry with both Foundress and Prioress for desiring to admit anyone under 21. "I present to you the child you have coveted"—he said to the community in chilling tones on April 9, 1888. "I hope she will not disappoint your expectations, but should it so fall out, I remind you that the responsibility is your own." He delayed her reception for two months and her profession for eight. The influenza epidemic of 1891 revealed to him the treasure God had entrusted to his care. [Ed.]

CHAPTER VII

CARMEL AT LAST

MONDAY, April 9, 1888—Feast of the Annunciation, transferred from Passiontide—was the day chosen for me to enter Carmel. On the eve we all gathered round the table where I was to take my place for the last time, and as if to increase the pain of parting—for farewells are in themselves heartrending—I heard the tenderest expressions of affection, just when I should have most liked to be forgotten.

The following morning, after a last look at the dear home of my childhood, I set out for the convent, where together we all heard Mass. At the Communion, when Our Divine Lord entered our hearts, I heard sobs on every side. I did not shed a tear, but as I led the way to the cloister door the beating of my heart became so violent that I wondered if I were going to die. Oh, the agony of that moment! One must have gone through it to understand it.

I embraced all my loved ones, then I knelt for Papa's blessing, and he too knelt as he blessed me through his tears. To see this old man giving his child to God while she was still in the springtime of life was a sight to gladden the Angels.

* * * * *

At length the door closed upon me, and I found a loving welcome in the arms of those dear sisters who, each in her turn, had been to me a mother, and likewise from the family of my adoption, whose tender devotedness is not dreamed of by the outside world. My desire was now accomplished, and my soul was filled with so deep a peace that it baffles all attempt at description.

This peace has been my portion during the eight and a half years of my life within these walls, never forsaking me even amid the hardest trials.

Everything in the convent delighted me, especially our little cell,[1] and I could fancy myself in my longed-for desert. I repeat, however, that my happiness was calm and peaceful; not even a gentle breeze came to ruffle the tranquil waters over which my little boat sailed, not a cloud came to darken the blue sky. I was indeed amply rewarded for all I had gone through, and it was with untold joy that I kept repeating: "Now I am here for ever."

Nor was my joy merely a passing illusion destined to fade away. From illusions God in His mercy has ever preserved me. I found the religious life just what I had expected: sacrifice was never a matter of surprise. Yet you know well, dear Mother, that from the very outset my path was strewn with thorns rather than with roses.

To begin with, I experienced great spiritual aridity, and in addition Our Lord permitted that Mother Mary of Gonzaga—sometimes unconsciously—should treat me with much severity. She never met me without finding fault, and I remember on one occasion when I had left a cobweb in the cloister she said to me before the whole community: "It is easy to see that our cloisters are swept by a child of fifteen. It is disgraceful! Go, and sweep away that cobweb, and be more careful in future." On the rare occasions when I spent an hour with her for spiritual direction, she seemed to scold me nearly all the time, and what troubled me more than anything was that I did not understand how I was to correct my faults—my slow ways, for instance, and my want of thoroughness. It occurred to me one day that she would prefer me to spend my free time in work, rather than in prayer as was my custom. I therefore plied my needle most indus-

[1] In the spirit of poverty, nuns avoid using the word *my* as denoting private possessions. Later on "our lamp," "our handkerchief," will occur. [Ed.]

triously without even raising my eyes. No one, however, knew of this, as I wished to be faithful to Our Lord and work for Him alone.

While I was a postulant, our Novice Mistress used to send me every afternoon at half-past four to weed the garden. This cost me a great deal, the more so because I was almost sure to meet Mother Mary of Gonzaga. On one of these occasions she remarked: "Really, this child does absolutely nothing! What are we to think of a postulant who must be sent out for a walk every day?" And this was her invariable method of dealing with me.

Yet, dear Mother, I thank God for having provided me with so sound and valuable a training: it was a priceless grace. What should I have become if, as the outside world believed, I had been made the pet of the community? Instead of seeing Our Lord in the person of my superiors I might have considered only the creature, and my heart, so carefully guarded in the world, would have been ensnared by human affection in the cloister. Happily, I was preserved from such a disaster.

I can truly say that not only in what I have described, but in trials that affected me more keenly, Suffering opened wide her arms to me from the first and I took her fondly to my heart. In the solemn examination before making the vows I thus declared my reasons for entering Carmel—"*I have come to save souls and especially to pray for priests.*" The end cannot be reached without adopting the means, and since Our Lord had made me understand that it was through the cross He would give me souls, the more crosses I encountered the stronger became my attraction to suffering. Unknown to anyone, this was the path I trod for fully five years: it was precisely the flower I wished to offer to Jesus—a hidden flower which keeps its perfume only for Heaven.

Two months after I entered Carmel, Father Pichon[1]

[1] Of the Society of Jesus. He was one of the witnesses at the Tribunal of the Beatification, and after having given over a thousand retreats in France and Canada, he died in 1919 as he was preparing

was astonished at the workings of grace in my soul; he considered my fervour quite childlike and my path a most peaceful one. The spiritual direction given me by this holy priest in the confessional would have brought me great comfort, had it not been for the extreme difficulty I felt in opening my heart. Nevertheless I made a general confession to him, and when I had finished, he said: "Before God, the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, and all the Saints, I declare that you have never committed a mortal sin. You must thank God for this favour which He has bestowed upon you without any merit whatever on your part."

It was not difficult to believe that it was without merit on my part, and, fully conscious of my weakness and imperfection, my heart overflowed with gratitude, and gratitude alone. The fear that I might have stained my baptismal robe had greatly disturbed me, and this assurance coming from the lips of a director such as our mother St. Teresa desired—one, that is, "combining knowledge with virtue"—seemed to me to come from God Himself. "May Our Lord always be your Superior and your Novice Master!" added Father Pichon: and indeed He ever was, and my Director too. By this I do not mean to imply that I was reserved towards my superiors; on the contrary, I always tried to be as an open book to them.

Our Mistress was truly a Saint, a perfect type of the first Carmelites; she had to teach me how to work, and so I was constantly with her.[1] Yet, kind as she was beyond all I can say, and much as I loved and appreciated her, my soul did not expand under her guidance. Words failed me when I spoke to her of what passed in my soul, and thus my time of spiritual direction became a torture and a real martyrdom.

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to offer the Holy Sacrifice. He had asked "his little Thérèse" to obtain for him the grace of saying Mass to the last day of his life. [CARMEL.]

[1] Sister Mary of the Angels, then Sub-Prioress. She was also one of the witnesses of the Beatification. [CARMEL.]

Apparently understanding my difficulty, one of our former Mothers once said to me during recreation: "I should think, child, you have not much to tell your superiors." "Why do you think that, dear Mother?" I asked. "Because your soul is extremely simple. And when you are perfect you will become still more so, for the nearer one approaches God the simpler one becomes." She was right; but although the great difficulty I experienced in opening my heart arose from simplicity, it was nevertheless a genuine trial. Now, however, without detriment to simplicity I can express my thoughts with the greatest ease.

I have already said that Our Lord Himself has always acted as my spiritual guide, for hardly had Father Pichon undertaken the care of my soul when his superiors sent him to Canada, and I could not hear from him more than once in the year. It was then that the Little Flower which had been transplanted to the mountain of Carmel turned quickly to the Director of directors and gradually unfolded itself under the shadow of His cross, having for refreshing dew His tears and His blood, and for its radiant sun His adorable Face.

Until then I had not appreciated the beauties of the Holy Face, and it was you, my little Mother, who unveiled them to me. Just as you had been the first to leave our home for Carmel, so too were you the first to penetrate the mysteries of love hidden in the Face of our Divine Spouse. Having discovered them you showed them to me—and I understood. . . . More than ever did it come home to me in what true glory consists. He whose "*Kingdom is not of this world*"[1] taught me that the only kingdom worth coveting is the grace of being "unknown and esteemed as naught,"[2] and the joy that comes of self-contempt. I wished that, like the Face of Jesus, mine "*should be, as it were, hidden and despised*,"[3] so that no one on earth should esteem me: I thirsted to suffer and to be forgotten. Most merciful

[1] John xvii. 36. [2] *Imit.*, ch. I. ii. 3. [3] Isa. liii. 3.

has been the way by which the Divine Master has led me, never leaving unsatisfied any wish He may have inspired; that is why I have always found His bitter chalice full of sweetness.

At the end of May, Marie, our eldest sister, was professed, and Thérèse, the Benjamin, was given the privilege of crowning her with roses on that day of her mystical espousals—a joy which was quickly followed by a cross. Ever since Papa's first attack of paralysis, we realised that he was very easily tired, and in the course of our journey to Rome I noticed that he often seemed exhausted and in pain. But what struck me above all was his progress in holiness. He had so completely succeeded in mastering his natural impetuosity of character that earthly things failed to disturb him. During our pilgrimage, for example, when we were in the train for days and nights at a stretch, some of the travellers grew weary, and, to while away the hours, played cards, becoming at times very noisy. One day they asked us to join in the game, but we refused on the pretext that we knew little about it. Unlike them, we found the time none too long to enjoy the magnificent views that everywhere met the eye. Their annoyance soon became manifest, and our dear Papa defended us quietly, suggesting that, as pilgrims, more of our time might well be given to prayer. Unmindful of the respect due to age, one of the players thoughtlessly exclaimed: "Thank God, there are not many Pharisees!" Papa did not answer, and seemed even to be pleased. Not long after this, he found an opportunity of shaking hands with the speaker, and the kindly action was accompanied by such pleasant words as to convey the impression that the rude remark had either not been heard or had been forgotten. But his habit of forgiveness, as you well know, did not date from this day only. Mamma and all who knew him bore witness that no uncharitable word ever passed his lips.

His faith and generosity were likewise proof against

trial. This is how he announced my leaving home to one of his friends: "Thérèse, my little Queen, entered Carmel yesterday. God alone could ask such a sacrifice, but He helps me so powerfully that my heart is overflowing with joy even in the midst of tears."

To this faithful servant was due a reward worthy of his virtue, and to that reward he himself laid claim. Do you remember the day on which he said to us in the parlour: "Children, I have just returned from Alençon, and there, in the church of Notre Dame, I received such graces, such untold consolation, that I made this prayer: 'My God, it is too much—I am too happy. It is impossible to reach Heaven in this way; I must suffer something for Thee!—and I offered myself as . . .'"? The word *victim* died on his lips—he dared not pronounce it before us, but we understood.

You know but too well, dear Mother, all the sad tale,[1] and it is needless for me to dwell on those heart-rending memories.

* * * * *

My clothing day was now drawing near, and Papa having recovered, contrary to all expectations, from a second attack of paralysis, the Bishop fixed the ceremony for January 10. The time of waiting had been long, but the beautiful feast came at last. Nothing was missing, not even snow.

Have I ever told you how fond I am of snow? Even when I was quite small its whiteness entranced me. Why this strange fancy, I wonder? Perhaps, because being a little winter flower, my eyes first saw the earth clad in its beautiful mantle. It was therefore natural that on the occasion of my clothing ceremony, I should wish to see it arrayed like myself in spotless white.[2]

[1] See note on p. 130.

[2] In honour of the royal Bridegroom, M. Martin had his child dressed in white velvet and rich lace (point d'Alençon). The long tresses of her golden hair, now preserved in a magnificent reliquary in the public sacristy of the Carmel, hung down over her shoulders and she carried a sheaf of lilies. The velvet has been used in the cloth-of-gold vestments made for the Beatification. [CARMEL.]

The weather, however, was so mild on the preceding day that it might have been spring, and I no longer dared hope for a fall of snow. The morning of the tenth bringing no change, I gave up my childish desire as impossible of realisation, and so went out of the convent for the ceremony.

Papa met me at the enclosure door, his eyes full of tears, and pressing me to his heart he exclaimed: "Ah! here is my little Queen!" Then giving me his arm, we made our solemn entry into the public chapel. This was indeed his day of triumph, his last feast here below; the sacrifice was now complete—his children belonged to God.[1] Céline had already told him that later on she also meant to exchange the world for Carmel, whereupon he cried in a transport of joy: "Come, let us visit the Blessed Sacrament together and thank God for all the graces He has bestowed upon our family, especially for the great honour He has done me in choosing His spouses from my household. Were I possessed of anything better I would hasten to offer it to Him." That something better was himself, "*and God received him as a victim of holocaust; He tried him as gold in the furnace, and found him worthy of Himself.*"[2]

After the ceremony in the public chapel, I re-entered the convent and the Bishop intoned the *Te Deum*. One of the clergy remarked to him that this hymn of thanksgiving was usually sung at profession only, but, once begun, it was continued to the end. And indeed it was fitting that the feast should be thus complete since in it were united all other joyful days.

The moment I again set foot in the enclosure my eyes fell on the pretty statue of the Holy Child smiling at me amid flowers and lights;[3] then, turning towards

[1] Léonie had entered a Convent of the Poor Clares, but the Order proving too austere for her delicate health, she had been obliged to return home. She afterwards became a Visitation Nun at Caen, taking the name of Sister Frances Teresa. [CARMEL.]

[2] Cf. Wisdom iii. 5, 6.

[3] Until her death Sœur Thérèse had charge of this statue of the Holy Child Jesus. [CARMEL.]

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St. Thérèse as a Novice

the quadrangle, *I saw it was all covered with snow!* What a delicate attention on the part of Jesus! To gratify the least wish of His little spouse He actually made her a gift of the snow. Where is the creature with power enough to make even one flake fall, to please his beloved? Owing to the warm temperature everyone was filled with amazement, but, hearing of my desire, many have since described this event as "the little miracle" of my clothing day, while at the same time expressing surprise at the strange fancy I displayed. So much the better—such things help to show forth still more the wonderful condescension of the Spouse of Virgins, of Him who loves lilies white as the snow.

After the ceremony the Bishop entered the enclosure and gave me many proofs of his fatherly tenderness. Before all the priests who were present, he spoke of my visit to Bayeux and my journey to Rome; nor did he forget the incident of how I had put up my hair. Laying his hand on my head he blessed me affectionately, and as he did so my mind dwelt with exceeding sweetness on the caresses Our Lord would soon lavish upon me before all His Saints, so that this gracious blessing came as a foretaste of Heaven.

I have said that January 10 was Papa's day of triumph. I likened it to the feast of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, for his day of glory was followed by a dolorous passion, just as in the case of Our Divine Master; and even as the agony of Jesus pierced the heart of His holy Mother, so were our hearts deeply wounded by the humiliations and sufferings of him whom we loved best on earth.

I remember how in the month of June, 1888, when we were afraid Papa might be stricken with cerebral paralysis, I surprised our Novice Mistress by saying, "I am suffering a great deal, Mother, yet I feel I can suffer still more." I did not then suspect the cross that awaited us. Neither could I know that on February 12, one month after my clothing day, our beloved

father would drink so deeply of such a bitter chalice.[1] I no longer protested that I could suffer more, and as there are no words to express our grief, I shall not attempt to describe it here. . . .

In Heaven we shall delight to dwell on those dark days, and even here the three years of our dear father's martyrdom seem to me the sweetest and most fruitful of our lives. I would not exchange them for the most sublime ecstasies, and in gratitude for such a priceless treasure my heart cries out: "*Blessed be Thou for the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us.*"[2]

Dear Mother, how *sweet* and precious was this *bitter* chalice, since from each stricken heart there came only sighs of grateful love. We no longer walked—we ran, we flew along the road of perfection.

Though still living in its midst, Léonie and Céline were no longer of the world; the letters they wrote to us about this time are full of the most edifying resignation, and when Céline came to see me, how sweet was our intercourse! Far from separating us, the grating of the Carmel united us more closely: the same ideas, the same desires, the same love for Our Lord and for souls made our very life. No word concerning the things of this earth entered into our conversation; but just as in former days when seated at the attic window our eyes were raised eagerly to Heaven, so now our hearts yearned for the joy that is beyond all time and space, and for the sake of our eternal happiness we chose to suffer and be despised here below.

Though my suffering seemed to have reached its height, its attraction for me never lessened, and soon my

[1] On this day, M. Martin was removed from Lisieux to a private asylum, where he remained for three years. At the end of that time, the paralysis having become general, Céline was able to bring him back to Lisieux, where he lived for three years more. He died at his brother-in-law's house, Château de la Musse, in the department of Eure, July 29, 1894. At the last moment he recovered full possession of his faculties and fixed upon Céline, then alone by his side, a look of the most tender gratitude. [CARMEL.]

[2] Cf. Ps. lxxxix. 15.

soul shared in the trials the heart had to bear. My spiritual aridity increased and I found no comfort in Heaven or on earth; yet amid these waters of tribulation so eagerly thirsted for, I was the happiest of mortals.

Thus passed the time of my betrothal—a time far too long for me. At the close of my year of novitiate, Mother Mary of Gonzaga told me I must not think of profession as the Superior of the Carmel had expressly forbidden it, and I must wait for eight months more. Though at first I found great difficulty in being resigned to such a sacrifice, divine light soon penetrated my soul.

At this time I was using Surin's *Foundations of the Spiritual Life* for my meditations, and it was brought home to me one day during prayer that my too eager desire to take my vows was mingled with much self-love. Since I belonged to Our Lord and was His little plaything to amuse and console Him, it was for me to do His Will and not for Him to do mine. I understood also that on her wedding day a bride would be scarcely pleasing to the bridegroom if she were not arrayed in magnificent attire. Now, I had not as yet laboured with that end in view. Turning, therefore, to Our Lord, I said to Him: "I do not ask Thee to hasten the day of my profession, I will wait as long as it may please Thee, but I cannot bear that my union with Thee should be delayed through any fault of mine. I will set to work and prepare a wedding dress adorned with all kinds of precious stones, and when Thou findest it sufficiently rich I am certain that nothing will keep Thee from accepting me as Thy spouse." Then with renewed zest I took up the task of making myself ready.

Since the day of my clothing I had received abundant lights on religious perfection and particularly on the vow of poverty. Whilst I was a postulant I liked to have nice things for my own use, and to find what was needful ready to hand. Jesus bore with me patiently. He does not disclose everything at once to souls, but as

a rule gives His light little by little. At the beginning of my spiritual life—between the age of thirteen and fourteen—I often wondered what greater knowledge of perfection could come to me later on, for I thought it impossible to acquire a better understanding of it than I had then. It was not long, however, before I learnt that in this matter the more one advances, the farther one seems from the goal, and now I am not only resigned to seeing myself always imperfect, but the thought of it even affords me joy.

To return to the lessons Our Lord deigned to teach me. One evening, after Compline, I searched in vain for our lamp on the shelves where they are kept. I concluded rightly that a Sister had taken it believing it to be her own, and during the time of the "Great Silence"[1] I could not ask to have it back. Must I then remain in darkness for a whole hour, just when I had counted on doing a great deal of work? Without the interior light of grace I should undoubtedly have pitied myself, but in the midst of the darkness I found my soul divinely illumined. It was brought home to me that poverty consists in being deprived not only of what is convenient but also of what is necessary, so that I felt happy instead of aggrieved.

About this time I began to have a preference for whatever was ugly and inconvenient, so much so that I rejoiced when a pretty little water jug was taken from our cell and replaced by a big one, badly chipped all over. I also made great efforts not to excuse myself, but I found this very difficult, especially with our Novice Mistress from whom I was unwilling to hide anything.

My first victory of the kind, though not a great one, cost me a good deal. It happened that a small jar which had been left by a window was found broken. Believing that I was the culprit our Novice Mistress reproached me for leaving it about, adding that I was most untidy

[1] In all religious houses the time from the close of night prayers until after the morning meditation is a period of strictest silence. [Ed.]

and must be more careful for the future. She seemed displeased, so without saying a word in self-defence I kissed the ground and promised to be more orderly. I was so little advanced in perfection that even trifles like these cost me dear, as I have said, and I found it necessary to console myself with the thought that all would come to light on the day of Judgement.

I endeavoured, above all, to practise little hidden acts of virtue, such as folding the mantles which the Sisters had forgotten and being on the alert to render them help. I had also a great attraction towards penance, although I was not allowed to satisfy the desire. Indeed the only mortification I was permitted was the overcoming of my self-love, which did me far more good than any bodily penance could have done. Meanwhile Our Lady helped me with my wedding dress, and no sooner was it completed than all obstacles vanished and my profession was fixed for September 8, 1890.

All that I have set down in such few words might have filled many pages, but those pages will never be read upon earth. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

PROFESSION OF SŒUR THÉRÈSE

SHALL I tell you, dear Mother, of the retreat before my profession? Far from feeling consoled, I went through it in a state of utter spiritual desolation—seemingly abandoned by God. Jesus slept in my boat, as was His wont. But how rarely will souls allow Him to sleep in peace! Wearied with making continual advances, our good Master readily avails Himself of the repose I offer Him, and in all probability will sleep on till my great and everlasting retreat; this, however, rather rejoices than grieves me. Such a frame of mind is sufficient to show that I am in truth no Saint, for I ought not to rejoice in my dryness of soul, but attribute it rather to my want of fervour and fidelity. I suppose I ought to be distressed that I so often fall asleep during meditation and thanksgiving after Holy Communion, but I reflect that little children, asleep or awake, are equally dear to their parents; that to perform operations doctors put their patients to sleep; and finally, that "*The Lord knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are but dust.*"[1]

Yet apparently barren as was my retreat—and those which followed have seemed no less so—I received unconsciously many interior lights on the best means of pleasing God and practising virtue. I have often observed that Our Lord will never give me a store of provisions, but nourishes me at each moment with food that is always new. I find it within my soul without knowing how it has come. I believe, quite simply, that it is Jesus Himself, hidden in my poor heart, who is

[1] Ps. cii. 14.

mysteriously at work inspiring me from hour to hour with whatever He wishes me to do.

Just before my profession I received the Holy Father's blessing through the kindness of Brother Simeon, and I am certain that this precious blessing helped me through the most furious storm of my whole spiritual life.

On the eve of the great day, usually so full of sweetness for a novice, my vocation suddenly appeared to me as unreal as a dream. The devil—for it was he—assured me that I was wholly unsuited for the Carmelite life, and that by entering on a way to which I was not called I was deceiving my superiors. The darkness became so intense that one fact alone stood out clear—I had no vocation and must return to the world. I cannot describe all I went through. What was to be done in face of such a difficulty? Happily I chose the right course, and decided to tell our Novice Mistress about the temptation without delay. There and then I called her out of the choir, and, full of confusion, revealed the state of my soul. Fortunately, her insight was clearer than mine, and, laughing at my fears, she completely reassured me. The devil was put to instant flight by this humble avowal; what he wanted was to keep me from speaking and so draw me into his snares. But it was now my turn to ensnare him, and to complete my humiliation I also told everything to Mother Prioress, whose consoling words dispelled the last shadow of doubt.

Next morning, September 8, my soul was flooded with heavenly joy, and in that peace "*which surpasseth understanding*"[1] I pronounced my holy vows. Many were the graces I asked, and feeling myself truly a "Queen" I took advantage of my title to beg from the King all possible favours for His ungrateful subjects. No one was forgotten. I longed that every sinner on earth might be converted, all captive souls in Purgatory

[1] Phil. v. 7.

set free, and on my heart I bore this letter containing what I desired for myself:

"O Jesus, My Divine Spouse, grant that my baptismal robe may never be sullied. Take me from this world rather than allow me to stain my soul by committing the least wilful fault. May I never seek or find aught but Thee alone! May all creatures be as nothing to me and I as nothing to them! May no earthly thing disturb my peace!

"O Jesus, I ask for peace . . . peace, and above all, LOVE . . . love without limit. I ask that for Thy sake I may die a martyr—give me martyrdom of soul or of body. Or rather give me both.

"Grant that I may fulfil my promises in all their perfection; that no one may think of me, that I may be forgotten and trodden underfoot as a grain of sand. I offer myself to Thee, O my Beloved, that Thou mayest ever perfectly accomplish Thy Holy Will in me without creatures placing any obstacle in the way."

When at the close of that glorious day I laid my crown of roses, as was usual, at Our Lady's feet, it was without regret; I felt that time could never take away my happiness.

Was not the Nativity of Mary a beautiful feast on which to become the spouse of Christ? It was the *little* new-born Mary who presented her *little* Flower to the *little* Jesus. That day everything was little except the graces I received, except my peace and joy as I gazed when night came down, upon the glorious star-lit sky, and thought that before long I should take flight to Heaven, and there be united to my Divine Spouse in eternal bliss.

On September 24, I received the veil, but this feast was heavily *veiled* in sorrow. Papa was too ill to come and bless his "little Queen," and at the last moment Mgr. Hugonin, who should have presided at the ceremony, was prevented from doing so; for other reasons, too, it was a day of gloom. And yet through it all, my soul was profoundly at peace. It pleased Our Lord, however, that on this occasion I should not be able to

restrain my tears . . . and they were not understood. True, I had borne far harder trials without shedding a tear, but then I had been helped by special graces, whereas on that day Jesus left me to myself and I soon showed my weakness.

Eight days after I had taken the veil our cousin Jeanne was married to Dr. La Néele, and at her next visit I heard of all the little attentions she lavished on her husband. I was greatly impressed, and I determined it should never be said that a woman in the world did more for her husband than I for my Beloved. Filled with fresh ardour, I strove with increased earnestness to please my Heavenly Spouse, the King of kings, who had deigned to honour me by a divine alliance.

When I saw the letter announcing our cousin's marriage, I thought I would amuse myself by composing an invitation which I read to the novices in order to bring home to them what had struck me so forcibly—that earthly unions, however glorious, were as nothing compared to the titles of a Spouse of Christ.

> God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, and the Most Glorious Virgin Mary, Queen of the Heavenly Court, announce to you the Spiritual Espousals of Their August Son, Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords, with little Thérèse Martin, now Princess and Lady of His Kingdoms of the Holy Childhood and the Passion, assigned to her in dowry by her Divine Spouse, from which Kingdoms she holds her titles of nobility—of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. It was not possible to invite you to the Wedding Feast which took place on the Mountain of Carmel, September 8, 1890—the Heavenly Court was alone admitted—but you are requested to be present at the At Home which will take place to-morrow, the Day of Eternity, when Jesus, the Son of God, will come in the clouds of Heaven, in the splendour of His Majesty, to judge the living and the dead. The hour being uncertain, you are asked to hold yourselves in readiness and to watch.[1]

[1] This letter, the style of which may sound strange to English ears, is modelled closely on the somewhat quaint letters whereby French

I prepared myself by a fervent novena for the retreat in the year following my profession, as I anticipated that it would be a time of severe suffering. I usually find preached retreats most trying, but this one proved an exception and brought me great graces. We had heard that the priest who was to give it understood better how to convert sinners than to direct nuns. If that were so, I must have been a great sinner, since God made use of him to bring me such consolation.

I had previously been a prey to all kinds of interior trials which I had found it impossible to make clearly known. But now I was able to unburden myself in a most marvellous way, so that the Father understood me completely, and even divined the state of my soul. He launched me full sail upon the ocean of confidence and love which had so long attracted me, but over which I had scarcely dared venture. He also told me that my faults did not grieve Almighty God, adding: "At this moment I hold His place, and I assure you on His behalf that He is well pleased with your soul."

These words were comforting and filled me with joy, for I had never heard it was possible that faults should not give pain to God. The Father's assurance gave me patience to bear the exile of life. It was, moreover, the echo of my inmost thoughts. I had long felt that Our Lord is more tender than a mother, and I have sounded the depths of more than one mother's heart. I know, by sweet experience, how ready a mother is to forgive the involuntary small faults of her child, and I remember how no reproach could have touched me more than one single kiss from you. Fear makes me shrink, while under love's sweet rule I not only advance—I fly.

Two months after the retreat, our saintly foundress, Mother Genevieve of St. Teresa, left us for the Carmel

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parents of the better class announce the marriage of their children. Such letters of "*faire-part*" are issued in the name of relatives to the third or fourth degree. [ED.]

of Heaven.[1] Before speaking of my impressions at the time of her death, I should like to tell you what a joy it was to have lived for some years with a soul whose holiness was not inimitable, consisting, as it did, in the practice of simple and hidden virtue. On more than one occasion she was the means of bringing me great consolation.

One Sunday, when I went to see her in the infirmary, I found two of the elder nuns already there. As I was quietly retiring she called to me and said, with something of inspiration in her manner: "Stay, my child, you are always asking me for a spiritual posy—to-day I give you this one: 'Serve the Lord in peace and in joy. Remember that our God is the God of peace.'"

Simply thanking her I left the room, moved to tears, and convinced that God had revealed to her my state, for it happened that I had been sorely tried that day—even to the verge of sadness. The darkness within my soul was so thick that I no longer knew if God loved me, so you can understand, dear Mother, how great was the light and consolation that followed.

The next Sunday I asked Mother Genevieve whether she had received any revelation as to my state, but she assured me she had not, which only increased my admiration, showing, as it did, how intimately Jesus lived in her soul, directing her every word and action. Such is the holiness I desire, a holiness that is truly holy and free from all illusions.

[1] She died on December 5, 1891, in her eighty-seventh year, having been professed in the Carmel of Poitiers. From Poitiers she came to Lisieux in 1838, two sisters, the Mlles. Gosselin, being responsible for the foundation. These ladies had but little money and there was no sympathy for the newcomers. A collection in the town and its neighbourhood realised the sum of £8. Such was their poverty that one postulant saw her reception as a novice indefinitely postponed for want of money to purchase a habit. Food was often lacking, but God watched over them. After fourteen years the Convent chapel was complete. Not until 1878 was the Convent itself finished, while the present parlours came into existence subsequently to the entrance of St. Thérèse. In preparation for the Beatification in 1923, and on account of the huge concourse of pilgrims, the chapel has been extended, a large sacristy, six altars, and the magnificent shrine being added at the same time. [ED.]

On the day this dear Mother's exile ended, I received a very special grace. It was the first time I had assisted at a death-bed, and though the sight impressed me deeply, I must confess that during the two hours' watching, a kind of torpor crept over me. I was grieving at my insensibility when, at the moment her soul passed to God, an extraordinary change was wrought in my whole being. In an instant I was filled with an indescribable joy and fervour, as if the soul of our blessed foundress had made me a sharer in the happiness she already possessed—for I am certain she went straight to Heaven. One day I had said to her: "You will not go to Purgatory, dear Mother." "I hope not," she answered gently. Assuredly God would not disappoint a trust so full of humility, and in the many favours we have received through her intercession lies the proof that her hope was fulfilled.

Each of the Sisters hastened to claim something belonging to our beloved Mother, and you know the precious relic I treasure. During her agony I had noticed a tear glistening on her eyelash like a diamond, and that tear, the last of all those she had shed on earth, never fell; I saw it still shining as her body lay exposed in the choir. So when evening came I made bold to approach unseen, with a little piece of linen, and now I am the happy possessor of the last tear of a Saint.

I attach no importance to my dreams, and indeed they seldom have any special meaning, though I often wonder how it is that since I think of God all through the day, my mind does not dwell on Him more in my sleep. As a rule I dream of woods and flowers, of brooks and the sea. I nearly always meet pretty children, or else chase birds or butterflies such as I have never before seen. But if my dreams are sometimes poetical, they are never mystical. One night, however, after Mother Genevieve's death, I had a more consoling one: I saw her giving to each of us something which had belonged to herself. When my turn came her hands were empty, and I feared

I was not to receive anything, but she looked at me lovingly and repeated three times: "To you I leave my heart."

Towards the close of 1891, about a month after that death so precious in the sight of God, an epidemic of influenza broke out in the convent. I had only a slight attack and was able to be about with two other Sisters. It is impossible to imagine the heart-rending state of our Carmel during those days of mourning. The worst sufferers were nursed by those who could hardly stand on their feet; death was all around us, and no sooner had one Sister breathed her last than we had to leave her and turn our attention to another.

My nineteenth birthday was saddened by the death of our Sub-Prioress. Together with the infirmarian I assisted at her last agony. Two more deaths followed in quick succession. During this time I did all the sacristy work unaided, and I sometimes wonder how I was equal to it.

One morning when it was time to rise I had a presentiment that Sister Magdalen was dead. The corridor, which should have been already lit, was in absolute darkness; no one as yet had left her cell. I determined to go in to Sister Magdalen's, and found her lying fully dressed upon her bed. I was not in the least afraid, and hastening to the sacristy quickly brought a blessed candle and placed a wreath of roses on her head. Amid all this desolation I felt the Hand of God, and I knew that His Heart was watching over us. It was without a struggle that our dear Sisters left this life to enter on a happier one; they lay as if asleep, with an expression of heavenly peace on their faces.

Throughout those trying weeks I had the unspeakable joy of receiving Holy Communion every day. It was indeed a sweet grace. Jesus treated me as a spoilt child, for a longer time even than His more faithful spouses. After the influenza epidemic He came to me daily for several months, a privilege not shared by the Com-

munity. I had not sought this favour, but it brought me untold happiness to be united day after day to Him whom my soul loved.

I rejoiced also in being able to touch the sacred vessels and to prepare the altar linen on which Our Lord was to be laid. I felt that I must increase in fervour, and often recalled those words addressed to a saintly deacon: "Be ye holy, ye who carry the Vessels of the Lord."[1]

And now, dear Mother, what can I tell you about my thanksgivings after Communion, not only then but always? There is no time when I have less consolation —yet this is not to be wondered at, since it is not for my own satisfaction that I desire to receive Our Lord but solely to give Him pleasure.

Picturing my soul as a piece of waste ground, I beg of Our Lady to take away my imperfections, which are as heaps of rubbish, and to raise upon it a spacious pavilion worthy of Heaven, and beautify it with her own adornments. I next invite thither all the Angels and Saints to sing canticles of love, and it seems to me that Jesus is well pleased to find Himself welcomed with such magnificence, while I, too, share His joy. But this does not keep off distractions and drowsiness, and I often resolve to continue my thanksgiving throughout the day in amends for having made it so badly in choir.

You see, dear Mother, that my way is not the way of fear; I can always find means to be happy and to profit by my failings, and Our Lord Himself encourages me to do so. Once, contrary to my usual custom, I felt troubled on approaching the Holy Table. For several days, the number of Hosts having been insufficient, I only received a small part of one, and on this particular morning the foolish thought came that if the same thing happened again I would understand that Our Lord did not care to come into my heart. I approached the rails . . . for a moment the priest hesitated, then gave me *two entire Hosts!* What a loving response!

[1] Words used in the ordination ceremony. [Ed.]

I have indeed much for which to be thankful to God, dear Mother, and I want to tell you something in all simplicity. He has shown the same mercy to me as to King Solomon. All my desires have been satisfied: not only desires of perfection but even those of which I understood the vanity, in theory if not in practice. Having always looked upon you as my ideal I wanted to be like you in everything. You used to paint charming miniatures, to write beautiful poems, and all this awakened in me a desire to learn painting,[1] to express my thoughts in verse, and to do some good to those around me. I would not ask for these natural gifts, so my wish remained hidden in my heart. But Jesus, hidden also there, once more deigned to show me the vanity of all that passes. To the astonishment of the community I succeeded in painting several pictures, in writing some poems, and in doing good to certain souls. And just as Solomon, "*turning to all the works which his hand had wrought, and to the labours wherein he had laboured in vain, saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind*,"[2] so experience taught me that the sole happiness of this earth consists in being hidden and remaining in total ignorance of created things. I understood that without love, even the most brilliant deeds count for nothing. Far from doing me any harm, these gifts which Our Lord showered upon me drew my soul more closely to Him and made me see that He alone is unchangeable, that He alone can fill the vast abyss of my desires.

While speaking of my desires, I must tell you about others of a different kind, which the Divine Master has

[1] Thérèse had kept this wish concealed from the days of her childhood, and later in life she made the following confidence: "I was ten the day Papa told Céline that she was to begin painting lessons, and I felt quite envious. Then turning to me he said: 'Well, little Queen, would you like to learn painting too?' I was going to say: 'Yes, indeed I should,' when Marie remarked that I had not the same taste for it as Céline. She carried her point and I said nothing, thinking it was a splendid opportunity to make a big sacrifice to Our Lord; but I was so anxious to learn that even now I wonder how I was able to keep silence." [CARMEL.]

[2] Eccles. ii. 11.

deigned to grant—childish desires, like the wish for snow on my clothing day. You know, dearest Mother, how fond I am of flowers, and that when I made myself a prisoner at the age of fifteen, I gave up for ever the delight of rambling through meadows bright with the treasures of spring. Yet I never possessed as many flowers as have been mine since I entered Carmel. In the world young men present choice flowers to their betrothed and in like manner Jesus did not forget me. I received for His altar an abundance of all the flowers I loved best: cornflowers, poppies, marguerites—one little friend alone was missing, the purple vetch. I longed to see it again, and, quite recently, it came to gladden me, and to show me that in the least things as in the greatest, God gives a hundred-fold, even in this world, to those who have left all things for love of Him.

One desire, the dearest of all, and for many reasons the most difficult of attainment, still remained unsatisfied —my wish to see Céline enter the Carmel of Lisieux. I had made a sacrifice of this, however, and I committed the care of my loved sister to God alone. I was willing she should go to far distant lands if need be, but I wanted to see her, like myself, the spouse of Our Lord. Aware that in the world she was exposed to dangers I had never known, I suffered intensely: my affection for her was that of a mother rather than of a sister, and I was filled with solicitude for the welfare of her soul.

One evening when she was to go to a dance with my aunt and cousins, I felt, without knowing why, more anxious than usual, and I implored Our Lord to hinder her from dancing. My prayer was heard and not only was His future spouse prevented from dancing, graceful dancer though she was, but her partner likewise, who found himself obliged to walk up and down most solemnly with her, to the astonishment of everyone. Finally, the poor young man slipped away feeling very much ashamed and did not dare appear again that evening. This unique occurrence increased my confidence in

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St. Thérèse - Sacristan

Our Lord, proving clearly to me that He had already set His seal on Céline's brow.

On July 29 of last year, God called to Himself our saintly and much tried Father. During the two years previous to his death he had lived in our uncle's house, where he was surrounded with the tenderest care, but owing to his helpless condition we saw him only once during the whole course of his illness. It was a sad interview! You remember it, dear Mother, and how at the moment of parting he raised his eyes, then, pointing upwards, said in a voice choked with tears: "*In Heaven!*"

Now that he had reached that beautiful Home the last ties which bound his consoling angel to the world were severed. When Angels have accomplished their mission here below they take instant flight to God. Is not that why they have wings? And Céline likewise tried to fly to Carmel, but the difficulties which met her on all sides seemed insurmountable. When matters were going from bad to worse, I said to Our Lord, one morning after Holy Communion: "Thou knowest, dear Jesus, how earnestly I have desired that the trials my dear Father endured should serve as his purgatory. I long to learn if my wish has been granted, but I do not ask Thee to speak to me; all I want is a sign. Thou art aware that one of our community is strongly opposed to Céline's entrance into Carmel—if she withdraw her opposition I shall regard it as an answer from Thee, and in this way I shall know if my Father went straight to Heaven."

God, who holds in His hand the hearts of His creatures and inclines them as He wills, deigned in His infinite mercy and ineffable condescension to change that Sister's mind. After my thanksgiving she was the first person I met, and with tears in her eyes she spoke to me of Céline's entrance, expressing a keen desire to see her amongst us. Shortly afterwards, His Lordship the Bishop of Bayeux removed the last obstacles, thus allow-

ing you, dear Mother, without the least hesitation, to open the door of our ark[1] to the poor exiled dove.

Now I have no further desire unless it be to love Jesus even unto folly! Love alone draws me. I wish for neither suffering nor death, yet both are precious to me, and I have long called upon them as the messengers of joy. Already I have suffered much; already it has seemed to me that my barque was nearing the Eternal Shore. From my earliest years I believed the *Little Flower* would be gathered in her springtime, but now the spirit of self-abandonment is my sole guide—I have no other compass. I am no longer able to ask eagerly for anything save the perfect accomplishment of God's designs on my soul. I can indeed repeat these words of our Father, St. John of the Cross:

> "I drank deep in the cellar of my Friend,
> And, coming forth again,
> Knew naught of all this plain,
> And lost the flock I erst was wont to tend.
> My soul and all its wealth I gave to be His Own;
> No more I tend my flock, all other work is done,
> And all my exercise is love alone."[2]

Or rather:

> "Love hath so wrought in me
> Since I have known its sway,
> That all within me, whether good or ill,
> It makes subservient to the end it seeks,
> And soon transforms my soul into itself."[3]

How sweet is the way of Love! True, one may fall and be unfaithful to grace, but Love knows how to draw profit from everything, and quickly consumes whatever may be displeasing to Our Lord, leaving in the heart only a deep and humble peace.

I have received much spiritual light through the works

[1] Céline entered the Carmel on September 14, 1894, and took the name of Sister Genevieve of the Holy Face. [CARMEL.]
[2] Spiritual Canticle: Stanzas 18 and 20.
[3] Hymn to the Deity.

of St. John of the Cross, and at the age of seventeen and eighteen they were my only food. Afterwards, all spiritual authors left me cold; as they do still. However beautiful and touching a book may be, my heart does not respond, and I read without understaning, or if I understand I cannot meditate.

In my helplessness, the Holy Scriptures and the *Imitation* are of the greatest assistance; I find in them a hidden manna, pure and genuine. It is from the Gospels, however, that I derive most help in the time of prayer; I find in their pages all that my poor soul needs, and I am always discovering there new lights and hidden mysterious meanings. I know and I have experienced that "*The Kingdom of God is within us*,"[1] that Our Master has no need of book or teacher to instruct a soul. The Teacher of teachers instructs without sound of words, and though I have never heard Him speak, yet I know He is within me, always guiding and inspiring me; and just when I need them, lights, hitherto unseen, break in upon me. As a rule, it is not during prayer that this happens, but in the midst of my daily duties.

Dear Mother, after so many graces may I not sing with the Psalmist that "*the Lord is good, that His Mercy endureth for ever*"?[2] It seems to me that if every soul were to receive such favours God would be loved to excess and feared by none; I believe that every least wilful fault would be avoided out of love, without thought of fear.

Yet all souls cannot be alike. They must differ, so that each divine perfection may receive special honour. To me He has manifested His Infinite Mercy and in this resplendent mirror I contemplate His other attributes. There, each appears radiant with *love*—His Justice perhaps more than the rest. What a sweet joy to think that Our Lord is just—that He takes into account our weakness and knows so well the frailty of our nature. What then need I fear? Will

[1] Luke xvii. 21.

[2] Ps. ciii. 1.

not the God of infinite justice, who deigns to pardon lovingly the sins of the Prodigal Son, be also *just* to me "*who am always with Him*"?[1]

In the year 1895, I received the grace to understand better than ever how much Jesus desires to be loved. While thinking one day of those who offer themselves as victims to the Justice of God, and who turn aside the punishment due to sinners, taking it upon themselves,[2] I felt such an offering to be both noble and generous. I was very far, nevertheless, from feeling myself drawn to make it, and from the depths of my heart I cried: "O my Divine Master, shall Thy Justice alone find atoning victims? Has not *Thy Merciful Love* need of them also? On every side it is ignored and rejected . . . those hearts on which Thou wouldst lavish it turn to creatures and seek their happiness in the miserable satisfaction of a moment, rather than cast themselves into Thy arms—into the ecstatic fires of Thy infinite Love.

"O my God, must that Love which is disdained lie hidden in Thy Heart? It seems to me that if Thou shouldst find souls offering themselves as a holocaust to Thy Love, Thou wouldst consume them rapidly and wouldst be pleased to set free those flames of infinite tenderness now imprisoned in Thy Heart. If Thy Justice which avenges itself upon earth must needs be satisfied, how much more must Thy Merciful Love desire to inflame souls, since '*Thy Mercy reacheth even to the Heavens*'![3] O Jesus, permit that I may be that happy victim—consume Thy holocaust with the fire of Divine Love!"

Dear Mother, you who allowed me to offer myself thus to God—you know the flames of love, or rather the oceans of grace, which filled my soul when I made that

[1] Luke xv. 31.

[2] This is the chief aim of the great Arch-Confraternity of the Sacred Heart established in the Sacred Heart Basilica, Montmartre, Paris. [Ed.]

[3] Cf. Ps. xxxv. 6.

Act of Oblation on June 9, 1895.[1] Since that day love surrounds and penetrates me; at every moment God's Merciful Love renews and purifies me, cleansing my soul from all trace of sin. I do not fear Purgatory, for though I know I do not deserve even to enter with the Holy Souls into that place of expiation, I also know that the fire of Love is more sanctifying than the fire of Purgatory, that Jesus could not will useless suffering for us, and that He would not inspire me with the desires I feel were He not willing to fulfil them.

This is all I can tell you, my beloved Mother, of the story of your little Thérèse. You know what she is, and what Jesus has done for her, far better than she herself does, so you will forgive her for having greatly abridged the account of her religious life.

How will it end, this "History of a Little White Flower"? . . .

Will she be gathered in all her freshness, or will she be transplanted to other shores? . . . I cannot say; but this I know, that the Mercy of God will everywhere follow her, and that she will for ever bless the Mother who gave her to God. She will rejoice through eternity at being one of the flowers in that dear Mother's crown, and will sing together with her the ever-new canticle of thanksgiving and of love.[2]

[1] It was on June 9, 1914, the nineteenth anniversary of her holocaust, that the Congregation of Rites decided upon the Introduction of her Cause of Beatification. The Roman Process began in March, 1915. [Ed.]

[2] Here ends the first manuscript, and the story of Saint Thérèse as written for her sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus. [Ed.]

CHAPTER IX

THE NIGHT OF THE SOUL

DEAR Reverend Mother,[1] you have expressed the wish that I should finish singing the Mercies of the Lord,[2] and though I will not protest, I cannot help feeling somewhat amused as once again I take up my pen. What I am about to relate you know as well as I do, nevertheless I obey. I do not even ask of what use this manuscript could be, and should you burn it before my eyes without having read it, I should not be in the least distressed.

It is the general opinion of the community that you have spoilt me ever since I entered Carmel. It is written, however, that "*Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.*"[3] I thank you, Mother, for not having spared me; Jesus knew that His Flower was too weak to take root without the life-giving waters of humiliation, and it is to you she owes that inestimable blessing.

For some months the Divine Master has completely changed His method of cultivation. Finding, no doubt, that His Little Flower has been sufficiently watered, He allows her to grow up under the warm rays of a brilliant sun. He only smiles upon her now, and it is you, dear Reverend Mother, who mirror His smile to me. The bright sunlight, far from withering her petals, fosters their growth in a marvellous way. Deep in her heart she treasures those precious drops of dew—the humiliations of other days—and they remind her always how

[1] Chapters IX, X, XI, XII were addressed to the Reverend Mother Mary of Gonzaga, and were written later. [CARMEL.]

[2] "*The Mercies of the Lord I shall sing for ever.*" Ps. lxxxviii. 1. This was the motto of St. Teresa of Avila. Cf. also p. 29.

[3] 1 Kings xvi. 7.

frail she is. Were all creatures to draw near and pour out their flattery, no vain satisfaction would mingle with her joyful realisation that in God's eyes she is a poor worthless thing, and nothing more.

When I say that I am indifferent to praise, I do not mean the love and confidence you show me, which really touch my heart, but I feel that I have nothing now to fear from praise, and can listen to it unmoved, attributing to God all that is good in me. If it please Him to make me appear better than I am, that does not concern me, He can act as He will.

My God, by how many different ways dost Thou lead souls! We read of Saints who have left nothing behind them at their death, not the least thing by which they may be remembered, not a single written line; whilst others, like our Holy Mother St. Teresa, have enriched the Church with their sublime teachings, not hesitating to reveal "*the secrets of the King*,"[1] that He may be better known and better loved. Which of these two ways is more pleasing to God? It seems to me they are equally agreeable to Him.

All those beloved by God have followed the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who commanded the Prophet to write: "*Tell the just man that all is well.*"[2] Yes, all is well when one seeks only the Master's Will, so I, poor little flower, obey Jesus when I try to please you, who are His representative upon earth.

You know, Mother, that I have always desired to become a Saint, but in comparing myself with the Saints I have ever felt that I am as far removed from them as a grain of sand trampled underfoot by the passer-by is from the mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds.

Instead of feeling discouraged by such reflections, I concluded that God would not inspire a wish which could not be realised, and that in spite of my littleness I might aim at being a Saint. "It is impossible," I said, "for me to become great, so I must bear with myself and my

[1] Tobias xii. 7. [2] Cf. Isa. iii. 10.

many imperfections, but I will seek out a means of reaching Heaven by a little way—very short, very straight and entirely new. We live in an age of inventions: there are now lifts which save us the trouble of climbing stairs. I will try to find a lift by which I may be raised unto God, for I am too small to climb the steep stairway of perfection."

I sought to find in Holy Scripture some suggestion of what this desired lift might be, and I came across those words, uttered by the Eternal Wisdom itself: "*Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me.*"[1] I therefore drew near to God, feeling sure I had discovered what I sought. But wishing further to know what He would do to the "*little one*," I continued my search, and this is what I found: "*You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you.*"[2]

Never have I been consoled by words more tender and more sweet. O Jesus! Thy arms, then, are the lift which must raise me even unto Heaven. To reach Heaven I need not become great; on the contrary I must remain little, I must become even smaller than I am. My God, Thou hast gone beyond my desire and I will sing Thy Mercies! "*Thou hast taught me, O Lord, from my youth, and till now I have declared Thy wonderful works, and shall do so unto old age and grey hairs.*"[3]

When will this old age come to me? Surely as well now as later: in the eyes of the Lord two thousand years are no more than twenty years . . . than a single day!

But do not think, Mother, that your child is anxious to leave you, or that she deems it a greater grace to die in the morning than in the evening of life. What she really longs for and values above all things, is to please her Lord. Now that He seems to come near and draw her to His heavenly Home, her heart is full of gladness; she knows, only too well, that to do good here on earth

[1] Prov. ix. 4. [2] Isa. lxvi. 12, 13.
[3] Cf. Ps. lxx. 17, 18.

God has no need of anyone, and still less of her than of others.

Meanwhile, dear Reverend Mother, I know your will: I am to carry out at your side a work[1] which is both sweet and easy, and which I shall complete from Heaven. You have said to me as Our Lord to St. Peter: "*Feed my lambs.*" And I am amazed; I feel myself so little that I have entreated you to feed your lambs yourself and to keep me among them. In part you have complied with my reasonable wish, calling me their companion rather than their mistress; nevertheless you have bidden me to lead them through fertile and shady pastures, to point out to them where the grass is sweetest and best, and to warn them against the brilliant but poisonous flowers which they must never touch unless to crush underfoot.

How is it that my youth and inexperience have not frightened you? Are you not afraid that I shall let your lambs stray? But in acting as you have done you have doubtless remembered that Our Lord is often pleased to give wisdom to little ones.

On this earth, indeed, it is rare to find souls that do not measure God's Omnipotence by their own narrow thoughts. The world is ever ready to admit of exceptions: to God alone that liberty is denied. I know it has long been the custom to measure experience by age —in his youth the holy King David sang to the Lord: "*I am young and despised;*"[2] but in the same psalm, however, he does not fear to say: "*I have had understanding above old men, because I have sought Thy commandments; Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths; I have sworn and I am determined to keep the judgements of Thy justice.*"[3] You did not consider it imprudent to assure me one day that the Divine Master was enlightening me and giving me the experience of years. I am now too little to be guilty of vanity,

[1] Allusion to her appointment as Novice Mistress. [ED.]
[2] Ps. cxviii. 141. [3] Ps. cxviii. 100, 105, 106.

and too little to try to prove my humility by high-sounding words. I prefer, therefore, to own in all simplicity that "*He that is mighty hath done great things to me*,"[1] and the greatest of all is that He has shown me my littleness and how of myself I am incapable of anything good.

My soul has known trials of many kinds and I have suffered much here below. In my childhood I did so with sadness, while now I find sweetness in all things—even the most bitter. I admit you must know me intimately, dear Mother, not to smile as you read these words, for has ever a soul appeared less tried than mine? But if the martyrdom I have endured for the past twelve months were to become visible, it would cause no little surprise. Since it is your desire that I should describe it I will attempt to do so, but words are inadequate and I shall always fall short of the reality.

Last year during Lent I felt stronger than ever, and in spite of the fast, which I observed in all its rigour, I was perfectly well until Holy Week. But in the early hours of Good Friday—blissful remembrance!—Jesus gave me the hope that I should soon join Him in His beautiful Heaven.

Not having obtained permission to watch at the Altar of Repose throughout Thursday night, I returned to our cell at midnight. Scarcely had I laid my head on the pillow when I felt a hot stream rise to my lips, and thinking I was going to die, my heart almost broke with joy. I had already put out our lamp, so I mortified my curiosity till morning and went peacefully to sleep.

At five o'clock, the time for rising, I remembered immediately that I had some good news to learn, and going to the window I found, as I had expected, that our handkerchief was saturated with blood. What hope filled my heart! I was firmly convinced that on the anniversary of His death my Beloved had allowed me to hear His first call, like a sweet distant murmur, heralding His joyful approach.

[1] Luke i. 49.

I assisted at Prime and Chapter with great fervour; and hastened to kneel at your feet to confide my happiness to you. I felt no fatigue, and not the slightest pain, so I had no difficulty in getting permission to finish Lent as I had begun, and on this Good Friday I shared in all the austerities of Carmel without any relaxation. Never had they appeared sweeter . . . the hope of soon entering Heaven transported me with joy.

When I returned to our cell in the evening of that happy day, I was still full of joy and I was quietly falling asleep when, as on the previous night, Jesus gave me the same sign of my speedy entrance into eternal life. My faith at this time was so clear and so lively that the thought of Heaven was my greatest delight; I could not believe it possible that there should be wicked men without Faith, and I was sure that those who deny the existence of another world belie their convictions. But during the Paschal days, that time so full of light, Our Lord made me understand that there are really souls bereft of faith and hope, which through the abuse of grace have lost these precious gifts, the only source of pure and lasting joy. He allowed my own soul to be plunged in thickest gloom, and the thought of Heaven, so sweet from my earliest years, to become for me a subject of torture. Nor did the trial last merely for days or weeks; months have passed in this agony and I still await relief. I wish I could explain what I feel, but it is beyond my power. One must have passed through the tunnel to understand how black is its darkness. Let me try, however, to illustrate what I mean.

I will suppose that I was born in a land of thick fog, that I had never seen nature in her smiling moods or one single ray of sunshine. From my childhood I had heard of these things and knew that the country in which I dwelt was not my real home, that there was another land to which I must always aspire. This was no fable invented by an inhabitant of the land of fogs. It was an unquestionable truth; for the King of that sunlit

country had come to dwell for three and thirty years in the land of darkness, though alas! "*the darkness did not understand that He was the Light of the world.*"[1]

But, dear Jesus, Thy child believes firmly that Thou art the Light Divine; she asks pardon for her unbelieving brethren and is willing to eat the bread of sorrow as long as Thou shalt will it so. For love of Thee she will sit at that table of bitterness where these poor sinners take their food and will not rise from it till Thou givest the sign. But may she not say in her own name and in the name of her guilty brethren: "*O God, be merciful to us sinners*"?[2] Send us away justified. May all those on whom faith does not shine, at last see the light! My God, if that table which they profane must be purified by one who loves Thee, I am willing to remain there alone to eat the bread of tears until the day when it shall please Thee to bring me to Thy Kingdom of light. I ask no other favour beyond that of never offending Thee.

I have already told you, Mother, that from my childhood, I had had the conviction that I should one day be released from this land of darkness. I believed it not only from what I had heard, but also because the deepest and most secret longings of my heart assured me that there was in store for me another and most beautiful country, an abiding dwelling-place. I was like Christopher Columbus whose genius anticipated the discovery of the New World. But of a sudden the fog that surrounds me finds its way into my very soul, and so blinds me that I can no longer see there the lovely picture of my promised Home . . . it has all faded away.

When my heart, weary of the enveloping darkness, tries to find some rest and strength in the thought of an everlasting life to come, my anguish only increases. It seems to me that the darkness itself, borrowing the voice of the unbeliever, cries mockingly: "You dream of a land of light and fragrance, you believe that the Creator of these wonders will be for ever yours, you think to

[1] Cf. John i. 5.

[2] Cf. Luke xviii. 13.

escape one day from the mists in which you now languish. Hope on! . . . Hope on! . . . Look forward to death! It will give you, not what you hope for, but a night darker still, the night of utter nothingness!"

This description of what I suffer, dear Mother, is as far removed from reality as the painter's rough outline from the model he copies, but to write more might be to blaspheme . . . even now I may have said too much. May God forgive me! He knows how I try to live by faith, even though it affords me no consolation. I have made more acts of faith during the past year than in all the rest of my life. Whenever my enemy provokes me to combat, I try to behave like a gallant soldier. Aware that a duel is an act of cowardice, I turn my back on the foe without once looking him in the face; then hastening to my Saviour I tell Him that I am ready to shed my blood as a witness to my belief in Heaven. I tell Him that if He will deign to open it for eternity to poor unbelievers, I am content to sacrifice during my life all joyous thoughts of the Home that awaits me.

And so in spite of this trial which robs me of all sense of enjoyment, I can still say: "*Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings.*"[1] For is there a greater joy than to suffer for Thy love, O my God? The more intense and more hidden the suffering the more dost Thou value it. And even if by an impossibility Thou shouldst not be aware of my affliction, I should be still happy to bear it, in the hope that by my tears I might prevent or atone for one sin against faith.

You may think that I am exaggerating the night of my soul. If one judged by the poems I have composed this year it might seem that I have been inundated with consolation, that I am a child for whom the veil of Faith is almost rent asunder. . . . But it is not a veil . . . it is a wall which reaches to the very heavens, shutting out the starry sky.

[1] Ps. xci. 5.

When I sing in my verses of the happiness of Heaven and of the eternal possession of God, I feel no joy, I sing only of *what I wish to believe*. Sometimes, I confess, a feeble ray of sunshine penetrates my dark night and brings me a moment's relief, but after it has gone, the remembrance of it, instead of consoling me, makes the blackness seem denser still.

And yet I have never experienced more fully the sweetness and mercy of Our Lord. He did not send this heavy cross when it would, I believe, have discouraged me, but chose a time when I was able to bear it. Now it does no more than deprive me of all natural satisfaction in my longing for Heaven.

It seems to me, Mother, that nothing stands in the way of my going thither. I have no longer any great desires, beyond that of loving till I die of love. I am free, and I fear nothing, not even what I once dreaded more than anything else, a long illness which would make me a burden to the community. Should it please God I am quite content to have my sufferings of body and soul prolonged for years. I do not shrink from a long life; I do not refuse the combat. The Lord is the rock upon which I stand—"*Who teacheth my hands to fight, and my fingers to war. He is my Protector and I have hoped in Him.*"[1] I have never asked God to let me die young, but I have always thought that this favour will be granted me.

Very often He is satisfied with our wish to labour for His glory, and you know, Mother, how immense are my desires. You know, also, that through my own dearly loved sisters, Jesus has offered me more than one bitter chalice. The holy King David was right when he sang: "*Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*"[2] But perfect union can only exist upon earth in the midst of sacrifice. It was not to live with my sisters that I came to this dear Carmel: indeed, I foresaw clearly that the restrain-

[1] Ps. cxiii. 1, 2.

[2] Ps. cxxxii. 1.

ing of natural affection would offer scope for great suffering.

How can it be said that it is more perfect to separate ourselves from those who are bound to us by ties of blood? Are brothers to be blamed who fight side by side on the same field of battle, or who together win the martyr's palm? It is true, no doubt, that they encourage one another, but it is also true that the martyrdom of each inflicts a martyrdom on all. And so is it in the religious life, which theologians call a martyrdom. A heart given to God loses nothing of its natural affection; on the contrary, that affection grows stronger by becoming purer and more spiritual. It is with this love, Mother, that I love you and my sisters. I am glad to fight beside you for the glory of the King of Heaven, but I am quite ready to go to another battle-field, should the Divine Commander so will. There would be no need even of an order—a look, a sign would suffice.

Ever since I entered Carmel I have thought that if Our Lord did not take me quickly to Heaven the lot of Noah's dove would be mine, and that one day, opening the window of the ark, He would bid me fly away to heathen lands bearing the olive branch. And this firm hope has helped me to soar above all earthly things.

Knowing that even in Carmel there must be partings, I have tried by anticipation to make my abode in Heaven. I have accepted exile in the midst of an unknown people, not for myself alone, but, what was far more bitter, for my sisters also. Two were asked for by our own foundation, the Carmel of Saigon, and there was serious question of their being sent. My heart ached at the thought of the trials awaiting them, but I would not say a word to hold them back. All that is over now. Superiors brought forward insurmountable obstacles, so that my lips only touched the cup long enough to taste its bitterness.

Let me tell you, Mother, why, if Our Lady cures

me, I want to respond to the call from our convent at Hanoï. A very special vocation, it seems, is needed to live in the Carmels abroad, and many who think themselves called are mistaken; but you have told me that I have this particular vocation and that my health alone stands in the way. If, however, I am some day obliged to leave the cradle of my religious life, it will not be without a pang. My heart is naturally sensitive and it is precisely because of its capacity for pain that I wish to offer to Our Lord every kind of suffering it can bear. Here I am loved by you and by all the Sisters, and because this love is so sweet to me, I dream of a convent where I should be unknown, where I should taste the bitterness of exile. I know only too well of how little use I am, and it would not be for the sake of the service I might render to the Carmel of Hanoï that I would leave everything dear to me; my sole reason would be to do God's Will and to sacrifice myself for Him at His good pleasure. I should not be disappointed, for when we expect nothing but suffering, the smallest joy comes as a surprise; and when we seek it as a precious treasure, suffering becomes the greatest of all joys.

But I shall not recover from this sickness. My soul, nevertheless, abides in peace, for I have long since ceased to belong to myself. I have surrendered my whole being to my Spouse, and He is free to do with me whatsoever He pleases. He awakened in me an attraction for a life of complete exile, and asked me if I would consent to drink of that chalice. Without hesitation I tried to grasp it, but He, withdrawing His hand, showed me that my consent was all He desired.

O my God! from how much disquiet do we free ourselves by the vow of obedience! Happy is the simple religious: her one guide being the will of her superiors, she is ever sure of following the right path, and has no fear of being misled, even when it may appear her superiors are mistaken. But should she cease to con-

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sult the unerring compass, then at once her soul goes astray in barren wastes, where the waters of grace quickly fail.

You, Mother, are the compass which Jesus has provided to direct me safely to the eternal shore. I find it a joy to fix my eyes upon you, and then do the will of my Lord. By permitting me to suffer these temptations against faith, He has greatly increased within me the *spirit of faith*—that spirit which makes me see Him living in your soul, and communicating through you His holy commands. I know well that you make the burden of obedience sweet and light, but deep in my heart I feel that my attitude would remain unchanged, and that my filial affection would not grow less, were you to treat me with severity, because I should still see the will of God manifesting itself in yet another way for the greater good of my soul.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

AMONG the numberless graces I have received this year, not the least is a deeper insight into the precept of charity. I had never before fathomed the words of Our Lord: "*The second commandment is like to the first: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"[1] I had laboured above all to love God, and it was in loving Him that I discovered the hidden meaning of these other words: "*Not every one that saith to me: Lord, Lord! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father.*"[2] This will Our Lord revealed to me through the words of His *new Commandment* addressed to His Apostles at the Last Supper, when He told them "*to love one another as He had loved them.*"[3] I set myself to find out how He had loved His Apostles, and I saw that it was not for their natural qualities, seeing they were but ignorant men, whose minds dwelt chiefly on earthly things. Yet He calls them His friends, His brethren; He desires to see them near Him in the Kingdom of His Father; and to open this Kingdom to them He wills to die on the cross, saying: "*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"[4]

As I meditated on these divine words, I understood how imperfect was the love I bore my Sisters in religion, and that I did not love them as Our Lord does. Now I know that true charity consists in bearing all my neighbour's defects, in not being surprised at mistakes, but in being edified at the smallest virtues.

[1] Matt. xxii. 39.
[2] Cf. Matt. vii. 21
[3] Cf. John xiii. 34.
[4] John xv. 23.

The New Commandment

Above all else I have learnt that charity must not remain shut up in the heart, for "*No man lighteth a candle and putteth it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel; but upon a candlestick, that they who come in may see the light.*"[1] This candle, it seems to me, Mother, represents that charity which enlightens and gladdens, not only those who are dearest to us, but likewise *all those who are of the household.*

In the Old Law, when God told His people to love their neighbour as themselves, He had not yet come down upon earth; and knowing full well man's strong love of self, He could not ask anything greater. But when Our Lord gave His Apostles a new Commandment—"*His own Commandment*"[2]—He not only required of us to love our neighbour as ourselves, but would have us love even as He does, and as He will do until the end of time.

O my Jesus! Thou dost never ask what is impossible; Thou knowest better than I how frail and imperfect I am; Thou knowest that I shall never love my Sisters as Thou hast loved them, unless Thou lovest them Thyself within me, my dearest Master. It is because Thou dost desire to grant me this grace, that Thou hast given a new Commandment, and dearly do I cherish it, since it proves to me that it is Thy Will *to love in me* all those Thou dost bid me love.

When I show charity towards others I know that it is Jesus who is acting within me, and the more closely I am united to Him, the more dearly I love my Sisters. Should I wish to increase this love, and should the devil bring before me the defects of a Sister, I hasten to look for her virtues and good motives. I call to mind that though I may have seen her fall once, she may have gained many victories over herself which in her humility she conceals, and also that what appears to be a fault may very well, owing to the good intention that prompted it, be an act of virtue. I have all the less

[1] Luke xi. 33. [2] John xv. 12.

difficulty in persuading myself that this is so, because of my own experience.

One day, during recreation, the portress came to ask for a Sister to help her in some particular task which she mentioned. Now I had the eager desire of a child to do this very thing, and as it happened, the choice fell upon me. I began immediately to fold up our needlework, slowly enough, however, to allow my neighbour to fold hers before me, for I knew it would please her to take my place. Noticing how deliberate I was, the portress said laughingly: "Ah! I thought you would not add this pearl to your crown, you were too slow." And all the community were left under the impression that I had acted according to nature.

I cannot tell you what profit I derived from this incident, and how indulgent it has made me towards others. It still keeps in check any feeling of vanity when I receive praise, for I reflect that since my small acts of virtue can be mistaken for imperfections, why should not an imperfection be mistaken for virtue? And I repeat with St. Paul: "*To me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day. But neither do I judge myself. He that judgeth me is the Lord.*"[1] Since, therefore, the Lord is my Judge, I will try always to think leniently of others, that He may judge me leniently—or not at all, since He says: "*Judge not and ye shall not be judged.*"[2]

Returning to the Holy Gospels where Our Lord explains to me clearly in what His new Commandment consists, I read in St. Matthew: "*You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you.*"[3]

There are, of course, no enemies in Carmel; but, after all, we have our natural likes and dislikes. We may feel drawn towards one Sister and may be tempted to go a long way round to avoid meeting another. Well,

[1] 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. [2] Luke vi. 37. [3] Matt. v. 43, 44.

Our Lord tells me that this last is the Sister I must love and pray for, even though her manners might lead me to believe that she does not care for me. "*If you love them that love you, what thanks are to you?* For *sinners also love those that love them.*"[1] Nor is it enough to love; we must prove our love. We take a natural delight in pleasing friends, but that is not charity; even sinners do the same.

Elsewhere Our Lord teaches me: "*Give to everyone that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.*"[2] To give to everyone who asks is less pleasant than to give spontaneously and of one's own accord. Again, if a thing be asked in a courteous way consent is easy, but if, unhappily, tactless words have been used, there is an inward rebellion unless we are perfect in charity. We discover no end of excuses for refusing, and it is only after having made clear to the guilty Sister how rude was her behaviour, that we grant *as a favour* what she requires, or render a slight service which takes perhaps, one-half of the time we have lost in setting forth the difficulties and our own imaginary rights.

If it be difficult to give to anyone who asks, it is still more difficult to let what belongs to us be taken without asking to have it back. I say this is difficult, but I should rather say that it seems so, for "*The yoke of the Lord is sweet and His burden light.*"[3] And when we submit to that yoke we at once feel its sweetness.

I said just now that Jesus does not wish me to reclaim what belongs to me. This ought to appear quite natural, since in reality I own nothing, and ought to rejoice when an occasion brings home to me the poverty to which I am solemnly vowed. Formerly I used to think myself detached from everything, but since Our Lord's words have become clear, I see how imperfect I am. When starting to paint, for instance, if I happen

[1] Luke vi. 32. [2] Luke vi. 30.
[3] Cf. Matt. xi. 30.

to find the brushes in confusion, if a ruler or penknife be missing, I am sorely tempted to lose patience, and have strongly to resist the impulse to demand, and sharply demand, the articles required.

I may, of course, ask for them, and if I do so humbly I am not disobeying Our Lord's command. On the contrary, I am like the poor who hold out their hands for the necessaries of life and who if refused are not surprised, because no one owes them anything. To soar above all natural sentiment brings the deepest peace, nor is there any joy equal to that which is felt by the truly poor in spirit. Sometimes they ask with detachment for what is really needful: not only are they refused, but an attempt is made to deprive them of what they already possess. Yet they follow the Master's advice: "*If any man take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him.*"[1]

It seems to me that to give up one's cloak is to renounce every right, and look upon oneself as the servant, the slave of all. Divested of a cloak, however, it is easier to walk or run, so the Master adds: "*And whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two.*"[2] Hence it is not enough for me to give to the one who asks, I ought to anticipate the wish; I should show myself honoured by the request for service, and if anything set apart for my use be taken away I should appear glad to be rid of it.

I cannot always, indeed, carry out to the letter the words of the Gospel, for occasions arise when I am compelled to refuse a request. Yet, when charity has taken deep root in the soul, it shows itself outwardly, and there is always a way of refusing so graciously what one cannot give, that the refusal affords as much pleasure as the gift itself. It is true that people are more ready to beg from those who are most ready to give; still, on the pretext that I shall be forced to refuse, I ought not to avoid an importunate Sister, since the Divine Master

[1] Matt. v. 40. [2] Matt. v. 41.

has said: "*From him that would borrow of thee turn not away.*"[1] Neither should I be kind for the sake of being considered so, nor in the hope that the Sister will return the service, for once again it is written: "*If you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks are to you? For sinners also lend to sinners for to receive as much. But you, do good and lend, hoping for nothing thereby, and your reward shall be great.*"[2]

Along this path it is but the first step that costs—even on earth the reward will be great. To lend without hope of return may seem hard; one would rather give outright, for a thing once given is no longer ours. When a Sister comes to you and says: "I have our Mother's leave to borrow your help for a few hours, and you may rest assured that later on I will do as much for you," we may be practically certain that the time so lent will never be repaid, and therefore feel sorely tempted to say: "I will *give* what you ask!" The remark would gratify self-love, it being more generous to give than to lend, and in addition, it would let the Sister feel how little reliance you put in her promise.

The divine precepts do assuredly run counter to our natural inclinations, and without the help of grace it would be impossible to understand them, far less put them in practice.

I fear, dear Mother, that I have expressed myself more confusedly than usual, and I cannot think what you will find to interest you in these rambling pages. However, I am not writing a literary work, and if I have wearied you by this discourse on charity you will at least find in it a proof of your child's good will. I have to confess that I am far from living up to the lights I have received, yet the mere desire of doing so brings me peace. If I happen to stumble in the matter of charity, I rise again immediately, and for some months past I have not even had to struggle. With our Father, St. John of the Cross, I have been able to say: "My

[1] Matt. v. 42.

[2] Luke vi. 34, 35.

house is entirely at peace," and that peace I attribute to a certain victory which I gained over myself. Ever since then, the hosts of Heaven have hastened to my aid, not wishing me to be wounded after my valiant fight on the occasion I am about to describe.

Formerly, a holy nun of our community was a constant source of annoyance to me: the devil must have had something to do with the trial, for undoubtedly it was he who made me see so many disagreeable points in her. Unwilling to yield to my natural antipathy, I remembered that charity ought not merely to exist in the heart but also to show itself in deeds; so I endeavoured to treat this Sister as I should my most cherished friend. Whenever I met her I prayed for her, at the same time offering to God her virtues and her merits. I knew this would delight Our Lord exceedingly, for there is no artist who is not gratified when his works are praised, and the Divine Artist of souls is therefore well pleased when we do not stop at the exterior, but penetrate to the inner sanctuary He has chosen for His abode and admire its beauty.

I did not rest satisfied with praying earnestly for the Sister who gave me such occasions for self-mastery, but I tried also to render her as many services as I could; and when tempted to make a disagreeable answer, I made haste to smile and change the subject of conversation. The *Imitation* says: "It is more profitable to leave to everyone his way of thinking than to give way to contentious discourses";[1] and sometimes when the temptation was particularly violent, if I could slip away without her suspecting my inward struggle, I would run like a deserter from the battlefield. The outcome of all this was that she said to me one day, with a beaming countenance: "Tell me, Sœur Thérèse, what it is that attracts you to me so strongly? I never meet you without being welcomed with your most gracious smile?" Ah! what attracted me was Jesus hidden in

[1] *Imit.*, ch. III. xliv. 1.

the depths of her soul, Jesus who makes sweet even that which is most bitter.

I spoke just now, Mother, of my last resource for escaping defeat—namely . . . flight. It was scarcely an honourable method, I confess, but whenever I had recourse to it during my novitiate, it was always successful. Here is a striking example which I think will amuse you.

For several days you had been ill with bronchitis and we were all very anxious. One morning in discharge of my office of sacristan I entered your infirmary, very gently, to put back the keys of the Communion grating. Though I took care not to show it, I was inwardly rejoicing at the opportunity of seeing you. One of the Sisters, however, feared I should wake you, and discreetly wished to take the keys from me. I told her, with all possible politeness, that I was as anxious as she that there should be no noise, adding that it was my duty to return them. I see now it would have been more perfect to yield, but I did not think so then and consequently tried to enter the room.

What she feared came to pass—the noise we made awoke you, and the blame was cast upon me. The Sister made a lengthy discourse, the point of which was that I was the guilty person. I was burning to defend myself when happily it occurred to me that if I began to do so, I should certainly lose my peace of mind, and that as I had not sufficient virtue to keep silence when accused, my only chance of safety lay in flight. No sooner thought than done, and I fled. . . . But my heart beat so violently, that I could not go far and had to sit down on the stairs to taste in peace and quiet the fruits of my victory. This is without doubt an odd kind of courage, yet I think it better not to expose oneself in the face of certain defeat.

When I think over my novitiate days I see clearly how far removed I was from perfection; some things there are that make me laugh. How good God has

been to have trained my soul and lent it wings! All the nets of the hunter can no longer frighten me, for "*A net is set in vain before the eyes of them that have wings.*"[1]

It may be that at some future day my present state will appear to me full of defects, but nothing now surprises me. Nor does my utter helplessness distress me; I even glory in it, and expect each day to reveal some fresh imperfection. Indeed these lights on my own nothingness[2] do me more good than lights on matters of faith. Remembering that "*Charity covereth a multitude of sins*,"[3] I draw from the rich mine which Our Saviour has opened up to us in the Gospels; I search the depths of His adorable words, and I cry out with the Psalmist: "*I have run in the way of Thy commandments since Thou hast enlarged my heart.*"[4] And charity alone can widen my heart. O Jesus! ever since its sweet flame consumes me, I run with delight in the way of Thy *new Commandment*, and I desire so to run, until that glorious day when with Thy retinue of virgins I shall follow Thee through Thy boundless realm, singing Thy new canticle—the Canticle of Love.

God in His infinite goodness has given me, dear Mother, a clear insight into the deep mysteries of Charity. If only I could express what I know, you would hear a heavenly music; but alas! I can only stammer like a child, and if the words of Jesus were not my support, I should be tempted to beg leave to hold my peace.

When the Divine Master tells me to give to anyone who asks of me, and to allow what is mine to be taken without asking for it back, it seems to me that He speaks not only of the things of earth but also of the goods of Heaven. Neither the one nor the other are really mine;

[1] Prov. i. 17.

[2] "A lamp shines in the darkness; in the sunlight it loses all its brilliance. The more the Saints enjoy the light of God, the more conscious they are of their nothingness." [St. Gregory the Great.]

[3] Prov. x. 12.

[4] Ps. cxviii. 32.

I renounced the first by the vow of poverty and the others are gifts which are simply lent. If God withdraw them, I have no right to complain. But our own ideas, the fruit of our own mind and heart, we regard as a sacred and personal treasury upon which none may lay hands. For instance, if I communicate to a Sister some light given me in prayer and she afterwards reveals it as though it were her own, it would seem she is appropriating what is mine. Or if during recreation someone makes a witty remark, which her neighbour repeats to the community without acknowledging whence it came, its originator will look on this as a sort of theft. At the time, she preserves an unwilling silence, but on the first opportunity she will insinuate delicately that her thoughts have been borrowed.

Had I not experienced all these human weaknesses, Mother, I could not so well explain them. I should have preferred to believe myself the only one who endured such petty temptations, had you not bidden me listen to the novices' difficulties and give them suitable advice. In the discharge of this duty I have learnt much, and above all I have found myself forced to practise what I preached. I can say with all truth that now, by God's grace, I am no more attached to the gifts of the intellect than I am to material things. Should any thought of mine please my Sisters, I find it quite easy to let them regard it as their own. It belongs to the Holy Ghost, not to me, for St. Paul assures us that "*without the Spirit of Love we cannot call God our Father*,"[1] and is not the same Holy Spirit free to use me as a channel to convey a good thought to a soul, without my daring to look on that thought as my private property?

Besides, while I am far from depreciating beautiful thoughts which bring us nearer to God, I have long been of opinion that we must guard against overestimating their worth. Even the highest inspirations

[1] Cf. Rom. viii. 15.

are of no value without good works. Others may derive profit from these lights, provided they be duly grateful to Our Lord for allowing them to share in the abundance of one of His more privileged souls; but should that privileged soul take pride in her spiritual wealth and imitate the Pharisee, she becomes like a person dying of starvation before a well-spread table, while his guests enjoy the richest fare, and cast envious glances, perhaps, at the possessor of so many treasures.

How true it is that God alone can sound the heart! How short-sighted are His creatures! When they find a soul whose lights surpass their own, they conclude that the Divine Master loves them less. Yet when did He lose the right to make use of one of His children to provide others with the nourishment they need? That right was not lost in the days of Pharaoh, for God said unto him: "*And therefore have I raised thee, that I may show My power in thee, and My name may be spoken of throughout all the earth.*"[1] Centuries have passed since these words were spoken by the Most High, but His ways have remained unchanged—He has ever chosen human agents to accomplish His work among souls.

[1] Exod. ix. 16.

CHAPTER XI

THE NOVICE MISTRESS

WERE it given to an artist's canvas to think and speak, certainly it would never complain of being touched and re-touched by the brush; and knowing all its beauty to be due to the artist, it would not even feel envious of the brush. Nor could the brush boast of the masterpiece it had helped to produce, for it would understand that true artists are never at a loss, but play with difficulties and, to amuse themselves, often make use of the most unlikely and the most defective instruments.

I am the brush Our Lord has chosen to paint His likeness in the souls you have confided to my care. But an artist must have at least two brushes: the first, which is the more useful, gives the ground tints and rapidly covers the whole canvas; the other, a smaller one, is employed for the details of the picture. You, my dear Mother, represent the valuable brush Our Lord holds lovingly in His hand when He wishes to do some great work in the souls of His children; and I am the little one He deigns to use afterwards to fill in the minor details.

It was about the 8th of December, 1892, that the Divine Artist first took up His little brush, and I shall always remember those days as a time of special grace.

When I entered Carmel, I found in the novitiate a companion who was about eight years my senior. In spite of this difference of age we became the closest friends, and to encourage an affection which gave promise of fostering virtue, we were allowed to converse together on spiritual subjects. My fellow-novice

charmed me by her innocence, as well as by her frank and open disposition; on the other hand I was surprised to find how her love for you differed from mine, and in various ways her behaviour was a subject of regret. But God had already made me understand that there are souls for whom in His Mercy He waits unweariedly, giving them His light little by little, and I was determined not to forestall Him.

One day, while thinking over the permission we had received to converse together so that we might—as our holy Rule tells us—"incite one another to a more ardent love of our Divine Spouse," it came home to me with sorrow that our conversations did not attain the desired end; and I saw clearly that I must either speak out fearlessly, or put an end altogether to what resembled mere worldly talk. I begged Our Lord to inspire me with words at once kind and convincing, or better still to speak Himself in my stead. He heard my prayer, for "*those who look upon Him shall be enlightened*,"[1] and "*to the upright a light is risen in the darkness*."[2] The first of the texts I apply to myself, and the other to my companion who was truly upright of heart.

At our next meeting the poor little Sister saw well from the outset that my manner had changed, and blushing deeply she sat down beside me. I told her tenderly what was in my mind; then pointing out what true love really is, I proved to her that in loving Mother Prioress with such a natural affection, she was in truth simply loving herself. I confided to her the sacrifices of this kind I had been obliged to make at the beginning of my religious life, and before long her tears were mingled with my own. She humbly acknowledged herself in the wrong and admitted that what I had said was quite true; then, begging as a favour that I would always point her faults, she promised to begin a new life. From that day our love for one another became wholly spiritual and in us were fulfilled the words of the Holy

[1] Cf. Ps. xxxiii. 6. [2] Ps. cxi. 4.

Ghost: "*A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city.*"[1]

You know well, Mother, that I had no intention of turning away my companion from you. My aim was to explain to her that true love feeds on sacrifice, and that in proportion as our souls renounce natural satisfaction our affections become stronger and more unselfish.

I remember when I was a postulant there were times when I was so violently tempted to seek my own satisfaction, some crumbs of pleasure, by having a word with you, that I was obliged to hurry past your cell and cling to the banisters to keep myself from turning back. Many were the permissions I wanted to ask, pretexts for yielding to my natural affection suggested themselves in hundreds. How glad I am that from the beginning I learned to practise self-denial! Already I enjoyed the reward promised to those who fight bravely, and I no longer feel the need of refusing all consolation to my heart, for my heart is set on God. Because it has loved only Him, it has grown, little by little, till it can give to those who are dear to Him a far deeper love than if it were centred in a barren and selfish affection.

I have told you of the first piece of work which Our Lord deigned to accomplish, together with you, by means of His little brush, but that was merely a prelude to the masterpiece you entrusted to it later.

From the moment I entered the sanctuary of souls, I saw at a glance that the task was beyond my strength, and quickly taking refuge in Our Lord's arms, I imitated those babes who when frightened hide their faces on their father's shoulder: "Thou seest, Lord," I cried, "that I am too small to feed Thy little ones, but if through me Thou wilt give to each what is suitable, then fill my hands, and without quitting the shelter of Thy arms, or even turning my head, I will distribute Thy treasures to the souls who come to me asking for food. When they find it to their liking I shall know

[1] Prov. xviii. 19.

that it is not to me they owe it, but to Thee; while if on the contrary they complain, finding fault with its bitterness, I shall not be at all disturbed, but shall try to persuade them it comes from Thee, and will take care to give them none other."

The knowledge that it was impossible to do anything of myself greatly simplified my task, and confident that the rest would be given me over and above, the one aim of my interior life was to unite myself more and more closely with God. Nor has my hope been ever deceived: each time I have needed sustenance for the souls under my charge I have always found my hands filled. Had I acted otherwise, and relied upon my own strength, I should very soon have been forced to surrender.

In the abstract it seems easy to do good to souls, to make them love God more, and to mould them to one's own ideas. But, when we put our hands to the work, we quickly learn that without God's help it is as impossible to do good to them, as to bring back the sun when once it has set. Our own tastes, our own ideas must be put aside, and in absolute forgetfulness of self we must guide souls, not by our way, but along that particular path which Our Lord Himself indicates. The chief difficulty, however, does not lie even here—what costs more than all else is to be compelled to note their faults, their slightest imperfections, and to wage a deadly war against them.

I was going to say "unhappily for me"—but that would be cowardly—so I will say, happily for my novices, ever since I placed myself in the arms of Jesus I have been like a watchman on the look-out for the enemy from the highest turret of a fortified castle. Nothing escapes me; indeed my clear-sightedness often gives me matter for surprise, and makes me think it quite excusable in the prophet Jonas to have fled before the face of the Lord rather than announce the ruin of Ninive. I would prefer to receive a thousand reproofs rather than inflict one, yet I feel it necessary that the

task should cause me pain, for if I spoke through natural impulse only, the soul in fault would not understand she was in the wrong and would simply think: "The Sister in charge of me is annoyed about something and vents her displeasure upon me, although I am full of the best intentions."

But in this, as in all else, I must practise sacrifice and self-denial. When I write a letter I feel it will produce no fruit unless it cost an effort and the effort be made only out of obedience. So, too, when I am talking with a novice I am ever on the watch to mortify myself, avoiding all questions which would tend to gratify my curiosity. Should she begin to speak on an interesting subject, and leaving it unfinished pass on to another that wearies me, I am careful not to remind her of the digression, for no good can come of self-seeking.

Your little lambs find me severe, I know, Mother, and if they were to read these lines they would say that, so far as they can see, it does not in the least distress me to run after them, and to point out how they have soiled or torn their beautiful white fleece. But whatever they may say, they know in their hearts that I love them with a very great love, and they need have no fear of my imitating "*the hireling . . . who seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and flieth.*"[1] I am ready to lay down my life for my novices, though my affection is so disinterested that I would not have them know it. By God's help, I have never tried to draw their hearts to myself. I have always known that my mission was to lead them to Him, and to you, Mother, who on earth hold His place in their regard, and whom, therefore, they must love and respect.

I have already told you how much knowledge I gained through guiding others. From the beginning I realised that all souls have more or less the same battles to fight, but on the other hand I saw that since no two souls are exactly alike, each one must be dealt with

[1] John x. 12.

differently. With some I have to humble myself and not to shrink from confessing my own struggles and defeats; by this means they have less difficulty in acknowledging their faults, being consoled by the discovery that I know of their trials from my own experience. In dealing with others, my only hope of success lies in being firm and in never going back on what I have said, since self-abasement would be mistaken for weakness.

Our Lord has given me the grace never to fear the conflict, to do my duty no matter what the cost. More than once it has been said to me: "If you want to do anything with me, you must treat me with gentleness, you will gain nothing by being severe." But no one is a good judge in his own case. During a painful operation a child would be sure to cry out and say that the remedy is worse than the disease, yet how great would be the little one's delight if at the end of a few days he should find himself cured and able to run about and play. The same thing happens with souls: they soon recognise and confess that a little bitterness is preferable to a surfeit of sweetness.

The change which takes place in a soul from one day to another is sometimes really marvellous. "You did well to be severe yesterday," a novice said to me. "At first I was indignant, but after I had thought it over I saw you were right. I left your cell thinking all was at an end between us and determined to have nothing more to do with you. I knew, however, that the suggestion came from Satan, and I felt you were praying for me. Then, as I grew calm, the light began to shine, and now I have come back to hear all you have to say."

Only too happy to follow the dictates of my heart I hastened to serve some food less bitter to the taste. But I soon discovered that I must not go too far, lest a single word should bring to the ground the edifice that had cost so many tears. If I let fall the slightest remark that might seem to soften the hard truths of the previous day, I noticed my little Sister trying to take advantage of the

opening thus afforded. Then I had recourse to prayer, I turned to Our Blessed Lady, and Jesus was victorious. My whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice: these are my invincible weapons, and experience has taught me that the heart is won by them rather than by words.

Two years ago, during Lent, a novice said to me, her face radiant: "You would never guess what I dreamt last night! I thought I was with my sister who is deeply attached to the world, and wishing to withdraw her from its vanities I explained to her these words of your hymn:

> 'Their loss is gain who all forsake
> To find Thy Love, O Jesu mine!
> For Thee my ointment-jar I break,
> The perfume of my life is Thine.'

I felt that what I said sank deep into her heart and I was overjoyed. This morning it seems to me that perhaps Our Lord wants me to give Him this soul. Would you approve of my writing to her at Easter telling her of my dream and that Jesus desires to have her for His spouse?" I answered that she might certainly ask the permission.

As Lent was not nearly over you were surprised, Mother, at such a premature request, and clearly inspired by God you replied that Carmelites should save souls rather by prayer than by letters. On hearing of your decision I said to my little Sister: "Let us set to work and pray very hard: what a joy it will be if our prayers are answered by the end of Lent!" O infinite mercy of Our Lord! At the close of Lent one more soul had consecrated herself to God by nothing less than a miracle of grace, wrought through the fervour of a humble novice.

The power of prayer is indeed wonderful. It is like a queen, who having free access always to the king can obtain whatsoever she asks. To secure a hearing there is no need to recite set prayers composed for the occasion—were this the case I should indeed deserve to be pitied!

Apart from the Divine Office, which in spite of my

unworthiness is a daily joy, I have not the courage to search through books for beautiful prayers; they are so numerous, that it would only make my head ache, and besides, each one is more lovely than the other. Unable either to say them all or to choose between them, I do as a child would who cannot read—I say just what I want to say to God, quite simply, and He never fails to understand.

For me, prayer is an uplifting of the heart, a glance towards Heaven, a cry of gratitude and of love in times of sorrow as well as of joy. It is something noble, something supernatural, which expands the soul and unites it to God. When my state of spiritual aridity is such that not a single good thought will come, I repeat very slowly the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary," which suffice to console me, and provide divine food for my soul.

But where am I? Once more I am lost in a maze of reflections. Forgive me, Mother, for wandering in this way. I admit that my story is like a tangled skein, but it is the best I can do. My heart is like a lake into which I cast my nets at random. I write down my thoughts as they occur.

I was talking about the novices. They often say to me: "You have an answer for everything; we really thought we should puzzle you this time. Where do you find all you teach us?" Some are even simple enough to think I can read their souls because I have happened to make known to them—without revelation—the subject of their thoughts.

On one occasion the senior novice had determined to hide from me a great sorrow which was causing her much pain. She had spent a miserable night, but had kept back the tears lest her eyes should betray her. When she came to me her face was bright and she spoke in a cheerful tone. I said to her simply: "I am sure you are in trouble." She looked at me with amazement, and her surprise was so great that it reacted on

me, conveying an impression of the supernatural. I felt that God was there close to us, and that unwittingly —for I have not the gift of reading souls—I had spoken as one inspired. After that I was able to console her completely.

And now, dear Mother, I will tell you of my greatest spiritual gain in dealing with the novices. You know they are under no restriction and are therefore allowed to say anything they like to me. This is easy since they do not owe me the respect due to a Novice Mistress. I cannot say that Our Lord makes me walk in the way of exterior humiliation; He is content with humbling me in my inmost soul. In the eyes of creatures, success crowns all my efforts, and—if the words may be used of life in the cloister—I walk in the dangerous path of honour. In this respect I understand the design of God and of Superiors. If I were looked upon by my Sisters as a useless member of the community, incapable and wanting in judgement, you could not employ me to help you, and therefore the Divine Master has thrown a veil over my shortcomings, interior and exterior. Many compliments come to me from the novices in consequence. The compliments are sincere, for I know they mean what they say, but the remembrance of my weakness is so constantly present to me that there is no room for vanity. My soul, however, tires at times of this over-sweet food and longs for something other than praise. Our Lord then serves me with a salad well-flavoured and mixed with plenty of vinegar, the oil alone being wanting, which makes it still more to my taste. At the moment when I least expect it, this salad is set before me by my novices. Lifting the veil that hides my faults, God allows them to see me as I really am and they do not find me altogether to their liking. With a simplicity that is delightful they tell me how I try them and what they dislike in me; in fact they are as frank as though it were a question of someone else, for they know that it pleases me greatly when they are so outspoken.

This delicious banquet does more than please me, it fills my soul with joy. How can anything so contrary to nature afford such extraordinary pleasure? Had I not experienced it I could not have believed it possible.

Once when I had an intense longing for some humiliation, a young postulant gratified my desire so completely that I was reminded of the occasion when Semei cursed David, and with the holy king I repeated the words: "*Yea, it is the Lord who hath bidden him say all these things.*"[1] This is how God takes care of me: unable to provide me always with the strength-giving bread of exterior humiliation, He allows me from time to time to eat of "*the crumbs from the table of the children.*"[2] How magnificent are His mercies!

Since that infinite mercy is the subject of the song I am trying to sing on earth, dear Mother, I ought also to speak here of another real advantage which I reaped in the discharge of my little task. Formerly when I saw a Sister doing something I did not like, and seemingly contrary to our Rule, I used to think how glad I should be if I could only warn her and point out her mistake. But since this burden has been laid upon me and it has become my duty to find fault, my ideas have undergone a change. Now, when I chance to see something wrong I heave a sigh of relief. I thank God the guilty one is not a novice and that it is not my business to correct her; then I do all I can to find excuses, and to credit her with the good intentions she no doubt possesses.

Your devotedness throughout my illness, dear reverend Mother, has also taught me many a lesson of charity. No remedy seems too costly, and should one fail, you try something else. When I am present at recreation what precautions you take to protect me from the slightest draught! All this makes me feel that I ought to be as compassionate for the spiritual infirmities of my Sisters as you are, Mother, for my bodily ills.

I have noticed that it is the holiest nuns who are most

[1] Cf. 2 Kings xvi. 10. [2] Mark vii. 28.

loved; everyone seeks their company and is on the watch to do them a service without waiting to be asked. Virtuous souls who can bear to be treated with a want of respect and attention, find themselves surrounded by an atmosphere of love. It is with great truth that our Father, St. John of the Cross, says: "All good things have come to me since I no longer seek them for myself."

Imperfect souls, on the contrary, are left alone. They receive, of course, the measure of politeness which the religious life demands; but their company is avoided lest a word might be said which would hurt their feelings. When I say imperfect souls, I do not mean souls with spiritual imperfections only, for the holiest will not reach perfection till they are in Heaven. I mean those who, being supersensitive or wanting in tact and refinement, make life unpleasant for others. Defects of this kind are, I know, incurable, but I know too how patient you would be in nursing and striving to relieve me, even were my illness to last for years.

From all this I conclude that I ought to seek the companionship of those Sisters for whom I feel a natural aversion, and try to be their good Samaritan. It frequently needs only a word or a smile to impart fresh life to a despondent soul. Yet it is not merely in the hope of bringing consolation that I wish to be kind; if it were, I should soon be discouraged, for often well-intentioned words are totally misunderstood. Consequently, in order that I may lose neither time nor labour, I try to act solely to please Our Lord by following this precept of the Gospel: "*When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame, and thou shalt be blessed, because they have naught wherewith to make thee recompense, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.*"[1]

[1] Cf. Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

What can I offer to my Sisters but the spiritual feast of sweet and joyful charity? I know of no other, and I wish to imitate St. Paul who rejoiced with those who rejoiced. It is true he also wept with those who wept, and at the feast which I desire to provide, tears must sometimes fall, but I shall always do my best to change them into smiles, for "*God loveth the cheerful giver.*"[1] I remember an act of charity with which God inspired me while I was a novice, and, though seemingly small, it has been rewarded already in this life by Our Heavenly Father "*who seeth in secret.*"

Before Sister St. Peter became quite helpless someone had to leave the evening meditation at ten minutes to six and take her to the refectory. Aware of the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of pleasing the poor invalid, it cost me a great effort to offer my services. I was unwilling, however, to lose such a golden opportunity, remembering Our Lord's own words: "*As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me.*"[2]

I therefore humbly offered my help, which was accepted, though only after considerable persuasion. Every evening, when I saw her shake her sand-glass,[3] I knew it was the signal to start.

Summoning up all my courage I rose, and quite a ceremony commenced. First her stool had to be moved and carried in a particular way, without the least hurry, and then began the journey. Supporting the poor old Sister by her girdle, I tried to acquit myself of the task as gently as I could; if by some mischance she stumbled, I was told I was going too fast and that she would certainly fall; when I tried to lead her more slowly she would say: "Where are you? . . . I don't feel your hand. . . . You are letting go your hold. . . . I am going to fall! . . . I was right when I said you were too young to take care of me."

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 7.

[2] Matt. xxv. 40.

[3] In a spirit of poverty, sand-glasses—instead of watches—are used by the Carmelites to measure the time. [Ed.]

At last we reached the refectory without further mishap, but there fresh difficulties awaited me. Taking every care not to hurt the poor invalid, I had to install her, with some manœuvring, in her place; that done, I had to turn back her sleeves—always according to her own special rubric—and then I was free to go. Noticing, however, that it was with extreme difficulty she cut her bread, I would not leave her till I had rendered this last little service. As she had never expressed any wish that I should do so, the unexpected kindness touched her greatly. Through it—as I learnt later—and still more by bestowing on her my "sweetest smile" at the end of my task, I won her entire confidence.

A long time has elapsed since all this happened, but Our Lord allows the memory of it to linger with me like a perfume from Heaven. One cold winter's evening when I was humbly leading Sister St. Peter, there suddenly fell on my ears the harmonious strains of distant music. A picture rose before me of a richly-furnished room, brilliantly lighted and decorated, and full of elegantly dressed young girls conversing together as is the way of the world. Then I turned to the poor invalid; instead of sweet music I heard her complaints, instead of rich gilding I saw the bare brick walls of our cloister, scarcely visible in the dim flickering light.

The contrast thrilled me, and Our Lord so illumined my soul with the rays of His truth, in the light of which the pleasures of the world are but darkness, that not for a thousand years of such worldly delights would I have bartered the ten minutes spent in my act of charity. And if now, in days of pain and amid the smoke of battle, the thought that God has withdrawn us from the world is so entrancing, what will it be when in eternal glory and everlasting repose we realise the favour He has done us here, by singling us out to dwell in His house, which is the very portal of Heaven?

These transports of joy have not always accompanied my acts of charity, but from the beginning of my

religious life Our Lord would have me understand how sweet it is to see Himself in the heart of His spouses, and therefore when I acted as guide to Sister St. Peter, it was with such love, that I could not have taken more care had I been leading Our Divine Lord Himself. But to prove, dear Mother, what I have just said about my difficulties in the past with regard to charity, I shall relate to you a few of my many struggles.

For a long time my place at meditation was near a Sister who fidgeted incessantly, either with her rosary or with something else. Possibly I alone heard her because of my very sensitive ear, but I cannot tell you to what an extent I was tried by the irritating noise. There was a strong temptation to turn round and with one glance to silence the offender; yet in my heart I knew I ought to bear with her patiently, for the love of God first of all, and also to avoid causing her pain. I therefore remained quiet, but the effort cost me so much that sometimes I was bathed in perspiration, and my meditation consisted merely in the prayer of suffering. Finally I sought a way of gaining peace, in my inmost heart at least, and so I tried to find pleasure in the disagreeable noise. Instead of vainly attempting not to hear it, I set myself to listen attentively as though it were delightful music, and my meditation—which was not the prayer of "quiet"—was passed in offering this music to Our Lord.[1]

On another occasion when I was engaged in the laundry, the Sister opposite to me, who was washing handkerchiefs, kept splashing me continually with dirty water. My first impulse was to draw back and wipe my face in order to show her that I wanted her to be more careful. The next moment, however, I saw the folly of refusing treasures thus generously offered, and

[1] See *The Interior Castle of the Soul*, by St. Teresa, where she shows how the Holy Ghost leads a soul from the simplest form of mental prayer through alternate stages of spiritual sweetness and desolation (the purgative way), to the prayer of "quiet," or recollection (the illuminative way), and finally to the sublime prayer of "union" in its lower and higher form (the unitive way). [Ed.]

I carefully refrained from betraying any annoyance. On the contrary I made such efforts to welcome the shower of dirty water that at the end of half an hour I had taken quite a fancy to the novel kind of aspersion, and resolved to return as often as possible to the place where such precious treasures were freely bestowed.

You see, Mother, that I am but a *very little* soul, who can offer to God only *very little* things. It still happens that I frequently miss the opportunity of welcoming these small sacrifices which bring so much peace; but I am not discouraged—I bear the loss of a little peace and I try to be more watchful in the future.

How happy Our Lord makes me, how sweet and easy is His service in this life! He has always given me what I desired, or rather He has made me desire what He wishes to give. A short time before the terrible temptation against faith, I had been thinking how free I was from great outward trials, and that if interior suffering was to be my lot, God must alter my spiritual path, a change which did not seem to me likely. Yet I felt I could not go on always living in peace and quiet, and I wondered how God would act.

The answer was not long in coming, and it showed me that He whom I love is never at a loss, for without altering my path He sent me this great trial, which soon mingled a salutary bitterness with all the joy.

CHAPTER XII

THE APOSTLE OF PRAYER

IT is not only when He is about to send some trial that Our Lord gives me warning and awakens my desires. For years I had felt a longing to have a brother a priest, though I knew my wish could not be realised. I used often to think that if my little brothers had not been taken to Heaven I should have had the happiness of seeing them at the altar, and I greatly regretted being deprived of such a joy. Yet God went far beyond my dream. I had only longed for one brother who would remember me each day at the altar, and He has united me in the bonds of spiritual friendship with two of His apostles. I should like to tell you, dear Mother, how Our Divine Master granted me this favour.

In 1895, our Holy Mother, St. Teresa, sent my first brother as a gift for my feast. It was washing day and I was busy at my work when Mother Agnes of Jesus, then Mother Prioress, called me aside and read to me a letter from a young seminarist, in which he said he had been inspired by St. Teresa to ask for a Sister who would devote herself specially to his salvation, together with that of the souls one day to be entrusted to him. He promised that when he was ordained he would always remember in the Holy Sacrifice the one who should become his sister in Christ. And thus it was that I was chosen to have this future missionary for my brother. I cannot tell you, Mother, how happy I felt. Such an unlooked-for fulfilment of my desires awoke in my heart what I can only describe as the joy of a child, and it carried me back to those early days when pleasures

were so keen that my heart seemed too small to contain them. Years had passed since I had tasted such happiness. It was as if some forgotten chords had been stirred within me.

Conscious of my new obligations I set to work to discharge them and strove to redouble my fervour. Now and again I wrote to my new brother. Beyond all doubt it is by prayer and sacrifice we can best help our missionaries, but sometimes, when Our Lord is pleased to unite two souls for His glory, He permits them to exchange their thoughts and so rouse one another to a greater love for God.

Such a correspondence must of course depend entirely on the express desire of those in authority, otherwise it seems to me it would do more harm than good—if not to the missionary, at least to the Carmelite, whose life is so largely one of thought. For a correspondence carried on at her own request, even at distant intervals, instead of uniting her to God would occupy her mind uselessly and perhaps lead her to believe that she was doing wonders, when in reality, under cover of zeal, she was simply procuring herself a needless distraction.[1]

But here am I, dear Mother, launched, not upon a distraction, but upon a dissertation equally superfluous. . . . I shall never correct myself of these lengthy digressions which you must find most wearisome. Forgive me then, even if I begin again at the very next opportunity.

Last year, at the end of May, it was your turn to give me my second brother, and when I represented that, having given all my slender merits to one future apostle,

[1] St. Thérèse warned Mother Agnes of Jesus that if, after her death, young priests knew that she had been given as spiritual sister to two missionaries, they would solicit the same favour, and this might become a great danger. "It is only by prayer and sacrifice that we can be of use to the Church," she added. "Letters should be allowed but seldom, and not at all to those whom such a correspondence might preoccupy, and who would injure their souls, under the impression that they were working wonders. This is a most important matter. We Carmelites must not manufacture false coin to purchase souls. Now too often fair words written and fair words received are merely an exchange of false coin." (*Spirit of St. Thérèse.*) [ED.]

I feared they could not be given to another, you told me that obedience would double their value. In the depth of my heart I had felt certain of this, and moreover, since the zeal of a Carmelite ought to embrace the whole world, I hope with God's help to be of use to more than two missionaries. I pray for all, without forgetting our priests at home, whose ministry is often as full of difficulties as that of the missionary preaching to the heathen. . . . Like our Holy Mother, St. Teresa, I wish to be a true daughter of the Church, and to make prayer for all the intentions of Christ's Vicar the one great aim of my life.

But just as I should have taken a special interest in the work of my own dear brothers had they lived, without neglecting on that account the general interests of the Church, so now I unite myself in a special manner to the new brothers whom Jesus has given me. To each of them belongs all I possess, for God is too good, too generous to divide my offering; He is so rich that He gives without measure all I ask, even though I do not lose myself in lengthy enumerations.

Since I have two brothers, as well as my little Sisters the novices, the days would be too short to ask in detail for the needs of each soul and I am afraid I might forget something important. Complicated methods are not for simple souls, and as I am one of these, Our Lord Himself has inspired me with a very simple way of fulfilling my obligations.

One day, after Holy Communion, He made me understand these words of Solomon: "*Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments.*"[1] O my Jesus, there is no need then to say: In drawing me, draw also the souls that I love. The words "*Draw me*" suffice. When a soul has been captivated by the odour of Thy perfumes she cannot run alone; as a natural consequence of her attraction towards Thee, all those whom she loves are drawn in her train.

[1] Cant. i. 3.

The Apostle of Prayer

As a torrent bears down to the depths of the sea whatsoever it meets on its way, so likewise, my Jesus, does the soul that plunges into the boundless ocean of Thy Love bring with it all its treasures! My treasures, as Thou well knowest, are the souls it has pleased Thee to unite with mine, and which Thou Thyself hast confided to me. I dare, therefore, to borrow Thy own words, Thy prayer on the last night that saw Thee still a traveller on this earth.

O my Beloved, I know not when my exile will end . . . for many a night I may yet sing Thy mercies here below, but for me, too, will come the last night of all . . . and then I wish to be able to say:

"*I have glorified Thee upon earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and to me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy Word. Now they have known that all things which Thou hast given me are from Thee: because the words which Thou gavest me I have given to them; and they have received them, and have known for certain that I came forth from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given me, because they are Thine. And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are one. And now I come to Thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy filled in themselves. I do not ask that Thou take them away out of the world, but that Thou preserve them from evil. They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. And not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me, that they may see my glory which Thou hast given me, because Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world. And I have made known Thy Name unto them, and will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.*"[1]

[1] Cf. John xvii.

Thus, dear Lord, would I repeat Thy words before losing myself in Thy loving embrace. Perhaps I am very daring . . . and yet for a long time hast Thou not allowed me to be daring with Thee? Thou hast said to me as the Father of the Prodigal to his elder son: "*All I have is thine.*"[1] And therefore I may use Thy own divine words to draw down favours from Our Heavenly Father upon all the souls under my care.

My God, Thou knowest I have ever desired to love Thee alone. I seek no other glory. Thy love has gone before me from the days of my childhood. It has grown with my growth, and now it is an abyss the depth of which I cannot sound.

Love attracts love, and mine, as it darts towards Thee, would fain fill to the brim the Abyss that draws it, but alas! my love is not even a drop in that Ocean. To love Thee as Thou lovest me, I must borrow Thy own love—thus only can my desire be satisfied. O my Jesus, it seems to me that Thou couldst not have overwhelmed a soul with more love than Thou hast poured out on mine, and that is why I dare ask of Thee to love those Thou hast given me, even as Thou lovest me.

And if in Heaven I find Thou lovest them more than Thou lovest me, I shall rejoice, for I acknowledge that their deserts are greater than mine; but here on earth I can conceive no love comparable to that with which Thou hast favoured me, without any merit of my own.

What I have just written, Mother, amazes me. I had no intention of saying such things. When I repeated this passage from the Holy Gospel, "*The words which Thou gavest me I have given unto them,*" I was not thinking of my brothers but only of my little Sisters in the Novitiate, for I do not consider myself capable of teaching missionaries. The words I wrote for them were those others from the prayer of Our Lord: "*I do not ask that Thou shouldst take them out of the world.*

[1] Luke xv. 31.

. . . *I pray also for them who through their word shall believe in Thee.*" How indeed could I overlook the souls they are to win by their sufferings and exhortations?

But I have not fully explained my thoughts on those words of the Canticle of Canticles: "*Draw me—we will run!*" Our Lord has said: "*No man can come to Me except the Father who has sent Me draw him!*"[1] and further on He tells us: "*Everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*"[2] Again He adds: "*If you ask the Father anything in My Name He will give it you.*"[3] No doubt it was for this reason that, long before the birth of Our Lord, the Holy Spirit dictated these prophetic words: "*Draw me—we will run!*"

In asking to be *drawn*, we seek an intimate union with the object that has led our heart captive. If iron and fire were endowed with reason, and the iron could say, "*Draw me!*" would this not prove its wish to be identified with the fire to the point of sharing its substance? Well, such is precisely my prayer. I ask Jesus to draw me into the fire of His Love, and to unite me so closely to Himself that He may live and act in me. I feel that the more the fire of love consumes my heart, the more frequently shall I cry, "*Draw me!*" and the more also will those souls who come in contact with mine *run swiftly in the sweet odour of the Beloved.*

They will run—yes, we shall run together, for souls that are on fire can never remain inactive. They may certainly, like St. Mary Magdalen, sit at the feet of Jesus listening to His sweet and burning words, but though appearing to give Him nothing, they give far more than Martha, who was "*troubled about many things.*"[4] It is not, of course, Martha's work that Our Lord blames, for His own blessed Mother humbly devoted herself to the self-same duty, having to prepare

[1] John vi. 4.
[2] Matt. vii. 8.
[3] John xvi. 23.
[4] Luke x. 41.

the meals for the Holy Family. What He does blame is Martha's excessive solicitude.

The power of prayer has been understood by all the Saints, and especially, perhaps, by those who have illumined the world with the light of Christ's teaching. Was it not in prayer that St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, and so many other friends of God, acquired the wonderful knowledge which has enthralled the loftiest minds?

"Give me a lever, and a fulcrum on which to rest it," said Archimedes, "and I will lift the world." But what this scientist could not obtain because his request had merely a material end without reference to God, the Saints have obtained in all its fulness. The Almighty has given them as a fulcrum to lean upon, Himself—*Himself alone*—and for a lever, the prayer that inflames with the fire of love. And thus they have uplifted the world—thus do the Saints who still combat on earth continue to raise it and will continue to raise it till the end of time.

It now remains for me to tell you, dear Mother, what I understand by the *sweet odour of the Beloved.* Since Our Lord is in Heaven I can only follow Him by the traces full of light and fragrance which He has left behind Him. But as soon as I open the Holy Gospels, I breathe the perfume exhaled by the life of Jesus, and I know which way to run. It is not to the highest place but to the lowest that I hasten. Leaving the Pharisee to go forward, I repeat with all confidence the humble prayer of the publican. Most of all do I imitate the behaviour of Magdalen, for her amazing—or rather I should say her loving—audacity, which delighted the Heart of Jesus, has cast its spell upon mine.

It is not merely because I have been preserved from mortal sin that I lift up my heart to God in trust and in love. I am certain that even if I had on my conscience every imaginable crime, I should lose nothing of my confidence, but would throw myself, my heart broken

with sorrow, into the arms of my Saviour. I remember His love for the prodigal son, I have heard His words to St. Mary Magdalen, to the woman taken in adultery, and to the woman of Samaria. No—there is no one who could frighten me, for I know too well what to believe concerning His Mercy and His Love.

In the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert it is told how one of them converted a public sinner whose evil deeds were the scandal of the whole country. Touched by grace, the sinful woman followed the Saint into the desert to perform a rigorous penance. On the first night of the journey, before even reaching the place of her retirement, the vehemence of her love and sorrow broke the ties that bound her to earth, and at the same instant the holy man saw her soul borne by Angels to the Bosom of God. This is a striking illustration of what I want to say, but the reality itself is beyond the power of words to express.[1]

[1] Here ends the second manuscript, written by Saint Thérèse for Mother Mary of Gonzaga, who was twice her Prioress. The three MSS.—combined into one—were originally published as if addressed to this Reverend Mother. [Ed.]

CHAPTER XIII

A CANTICLE OF LOVE

MY beloved sister,[1] you have asked me to leave you some token, and with our Mother's permission I am glad to talk awhile with you who are doubly my sister, with you who lent me your voice when I could not speak, promising in my name that I would serve Jesus only. The child who writes these lines to-night, dear godmother, is the child whom you offered to Our Lord, and who loves you as a child loves its mother. In Heaven only will you be able to fathom the gratitude that fills my heart.

You wish to learn the secrets which Jesus confides to your godchild, and yet I know these secrets are already yours, for it was you who taught me to listen to His teaching. I will try, however, to tell you something, though only too conscious how impossible it is for human speech to put into words what the heart itself can scarcely realise.

Do not think that I am overwhelmed with consolations. Far from it! My joy consists in being deprived of all joy here on earth. Jesus does not guide me openly; I neither see nor hear Him. Nor is it through books that I learn, for I do not understand what I read. Yet at times I am consoled by some chance words, such as the following, which I read this evening after a meditation passed in utter dryness. "Here is the Master I give thee, He will teach thee all that thou shouldst do. I wish to make thee read in the Book of Life wherein is contained the *science of love*."[2] The science of love—

[1] This chapter reproduces the third manuscript of our Saint, which was addressed to her eldest sister Marie—Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart. [CARMEL.]

[2] Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary.

how sweetly do these words re-echo in my soul! I wish for no other knowledge, and like the Spouse in the Canticle of Canticles, "*having given up all the substance of my house for love, I reckon it as nothing.*"[1] I understand clearly that through love alone can we become pleasing to God, and my sole ambition is to acquire it.

Jesus deigns to point out to me the only way which leads to Love's divine furnace, and that way is self-surrender: it is the confidence of the little child who sleeps without fear in its father's arms. Through the mouth of Solomon, the Holy Ghost has said: "*Whosoever is a little one, let him come unto Me,*"[2] and elsewhere the same Spirit of Love declares that "*to him that is little, mercy is granted.*"[3] In his name, too, the Prophet Isaias reveals how on the last day the Lord "*shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather together the lambs with His arm, and shall take them up into His bosom.*"[4]

And, as though all these proofs were insufficient, the same Prophet, whose inspired gaze penetrated the depths of eternity, cried out: "Thus saith the Lord: *You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you.*"[5]

O my beloved sister, after such words one can only be silent and weep for very love. If all weak and imperfect souls such as mine felt as I do, none would despair of reaching the summit of the mountain of Love, since Jesus does not look for deeds, but only for gratitude and self-surrender.

Does He not say: "*I will not take the he-goats from out of thy flocks, for all the beasts of the forest are Mine, the cattle on the hills and the oxen. I know all the fowls of the air. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks, or shall I drink the blood of goats? Offer to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.*"[6]

[1] Cant. viii. 7. [2] Prov. ix. 4. [3] Wisd. vi. 7.
[4] Isa. xl. 11. [5] Isa. lxvi. 12, 13. [6] Ps. xlix. 9-14.

This is all Our Lord claims of us. He needs our love, He has no need of our works. True, the same God who declares He has no need to tell us if He be hungry, did not disdain to beg a little water from the Samaritan woman; but when He said, "*Give me to drink*,"[1] He, the Creator of the Universe, was asking for the love of His creatures. He thirsted, indeed, but He thirsted for love. And Our Divine Lord's thirst is more intense to-day than ever. Among the disciples of this world He meets with nothing but indifference and ingratitude, and alas! among *His own* how few are the hearts that surrender themselves without reserve to the infinite tenderness of His Love!

Happy indeed are we who are privileged to understand the intimate secrets of Our Divine Spouse. If you would but set down in writing all you know, what beautiful pages would be given us to read! But you prefer to keep *the secrets of the King*[2] hidden in the depths of your heart. . . . To me you say it is "*honourable to reveal and confess the works of God*,"[3] yet I think you do well to keep silent, for no words of earth can communicate the secrets of Heaven.

As for me, after writing page upon page, I should still feel I had not yet begun. So varied is the outlook, so infinite the number of tints, that the palette of the Divine Painter will alone be able, when the night of this life has passed, to supply me with the colours needed to portray the wonders my soul descries.

Since, however, my dearest sister, you have expressed the wish to penetrate into the sanctuary of my heart, and to have in writing an account of the most consoling dream of my life, together with my "little doctrine," as you call it, I will comply with that wish in the following pages. I will address myself to Our Lord, for by so doing I shall be better able to set down my thoughts. You may find my expressions somewhat exaggerated,

[1] John iv. 7.
[2] Cf. Tob. xii. 7.
[3] Tob. xii. 7.

but I assure you there is no exaggeration whatsoever in my heart—there all is peace and calm.

O my Jesus, how tenderly and how gently Thou dost lead my soul! . . .

The storm had raged within me since Easter, the glorious feast of Thy triumph, until, in the month of May, there shone through the darkness of my night one clear ray of Thy grace.

While dwelling on the mysterious dreams which Thou dost sometimes send to Thy favoured ones, I thought that such consolations were not meant for me, for in my soul it was always night, darkest night. Then I fell asleep amid the fury of the storm.

The following morning, May 10, at the first glimmer of dawn, I dreamt I was walking in a gallery alone with our Mother when suddenly, without understanding how they had entered, I perceived three Carmelites, wearing their mantles and long veils. I knew they came from Heaven and I thought how glad I should be if I could only see the face of one of them. As if my wish had been heard, the tallest of the three Saints advanced towards me. I fell upon my knees and an inexpressible joy took possession of me as she raised her veil, or rather, threw it round me.

Without a moment's hesitation I recognised our Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus, foundress of Carmel in France.[1] Her face was of an unearthly beauty; no

[1] The Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus—Anne de Lobera—was born in Spain in 1545. She entered the Carmelite Order in 1570 in the first convent of St. Joseph of Avila, and shortly afterwards became the counsellor and coadjutor of St. Teresa, who called her "her daughter and her crown." St. John of the Cross, who was her spiritual director for fourteen years, described her as "a seraph incarnate," and her prudence and sanctity were held in such esteem that the most learned men consulted her in their doubts, and accepted her answers as oracles. She was always faithful to the spirit of St. Teresa, and had received from Heaven the mission to preserve the primitive spirit of perfection in the Reformed Carmels. Having founded three convents of the Reform in Spain, she established it in France and in Belgium. She died in the odour of sanctity in the Carmel of Brussels on March 4, 1621. On May 3, 1878, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII signed the Decree introducing the Cause of her Beatification. [CARMEL.]

rays came from it, and yet in spite of the thick veil which enveloped us, I could see it suffused by a soft light which seemed to emanate from her. She caressed me most tenderly, and finding myself the object of such affection I took courage to say: "Dear Mother, I entreat you, tell me, will Our Lord leave me much longer in this world? Will He not come soon to fetch me?" Smiling sweetly, she answered: "Yes, soon . . . very soon . . . I promise you." "Dear Mother," I asked again, "does He want more from me than these poor little acts and desires that I offer Him? Is He pleased with me?" Our Venerable Mother's face then shone with a fresh splendour and her expression became indescribably more gracious as she answered: "God asks nothing more of you; He is pleased, very much pleased"—and taking my head between her hands she kissed me so lovingly that no words can convey the sweetness of her embrace. My heart was full of joy, and remembering my Sisters I was about to beg some favour for them, when, alas! I awoke.

I cannot express the happiness that filled my soul. Months have now passed since this wonderful dream, yet its memory has lost nothing of its freshness or its heavenly charm. I can still see the loving smiles of the holy Carmelite and feel her fond caress. "*O Jesus! Thou didst command the wind and the storm, and there came a great calm.*"[1]

On waking, I realised that Heaven does indeed exist —a Heaven peopled with those who cherish me as their child. This impression still remains, and is all the more sweet because up to that time I had no devotion to the Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus; I had never sought her help, nor thought of her unless I heard her name, which was seldom. Now I know how constantly I was before her mind, and the remembrance of this increases my love not only for her but for all those in my Father's Home.

[1] Cf. Matt. viii. 26.

O my Beloved! this was but the prelude of yet greater graces which Thou didst will to heap upon me. Let me remind Thee of them to-day, and forgive my folly if I venture once more to tell Thee my longings and hopes that border on the infinite—forgive me, and that my soul may be healed, do Thou, I beseech Thee, fulfil all its desires!

* * * * *

To be Thy spouse, O my Jesus, to be a daughter of Carmel, and by my union with Thee to be the mother of souls, should not all this content me? Yet other vocations make themselves felt, and I would wield the sword, I would be a Priest, an Apostle, a Martyr, a Doctor of the Church, I would fain accomplish the most heroic deeds—the spirit of the Crusader burns within me, and I would gladly die on the battlefield in defence of the Church.

The vocation of the Priesthood! With what love, my Jesus, would I bear Thee in my hand when my words brought Thee down from Heaven! With what love, too, would I give Thee to the faithful! And yet, with all my longing to be a priest, I admire and envy the humility of St. Francis of Assisi[1] and feel myself drawn to imitate him by refusing that sublime dignity. How reconcile these opposite desires?

Like the prophets and doctors, I would be a light unto souls. I would travel the world over to preach Thy name, O my Beloved, and raise on heathen soil the glorious standard of the Cross. One mission alone would not satisfy my longings. I would spread the Gospel in all parts of the earth, even to the farthest isles. I would be a missionary, but not for a few years only. Were it possible, I should wish to have been one from the world's creation and to remain one till the end of time.

But the greatest of all my desires is to win the martyr's

[1] This great Saint remained a Deacon until his death. [Ed.]

palm. Martyrdom was the dream of my youth, and the dream has only grown more vivid in Carmel's narrow cell. Yet this too is folly, since to slake my thirst for suffering, not one, but every kind of torture would be needful.

Like Thee, O my Adorable Spouse, I would be scourged, I would be crucified! I would be flayed like St. Bartholomew, plunged into boiling oil like St. John, or, like St. Ignatius of Antioch, ground by the teeth of wild beasts into a bread worthy of God.[1]

With St. Agnes and St. Cecilia I would offer my neck to the sword of the executioner, and like Joan of Arc murmur the name of Jesus at the burning stake.

When I think of the fearful torments awaiting Christians at the time of Anti-Christ, my heart thrills within me and I wish those torments could be reserved for me. Open, O Jesus, the Book of Life, in which are written the deeds of all Thy Saints: each one of those deeds I long to accomplish for Thee.

To folly such as this, what answer wilt Thou make? . . . Is there on earth a soul more feeble than mine? Yet precisely because of my feebleness Thou hast been pleased to grant my least, my most childish desires, and now Thou dost will to realise those others more vast than the universe.

* * * * *

These aspirations becoming a real martyrdom, I one day sought relief in the Epistles of St. Paul and my eyes lighted on the 12th and 13th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. There I read that all cannot become apostles, prophets, and doctors: that the Church is composed of different members: that the eye cannot also be the hand.

The answer was clear, but it neither satisfied my long-

[1] An allusion to the beautiful words of the Martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch, uttered when he heard the roar of the lions in the Roman arena: "I am the wheat of Christ; let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may become pure bread." [Ed.]

ing nor brought me the peace I sought. "Then descending into the depths of my nothingness, I was so lifted up that I reached my aim."[1] Without being discouraged I read on and found comfort in this counsel: "*Be zealous for the better gifts. And I show unto you a yet more excellent way.*"[2]

The Apostle then explains how all the better gifts are nothing without Love, and that Charity is the most excellent way of going in safety to God. At last I had found rest.

As I meditated on the mystical Body of Holy Church I could not recognise myself among any of its members described by St. Paul, or was it not rather that I wished to recognise myself in all? Charity gave me the key to *my vocation.* I understood that since the Church is a body composed of different members, she could not lack the most necessary and most nobly endowed of all the bodily organs. I understood, therefore, that the Church has a *heart*—and a heart on fire with love. I saw, too, that love alone imparts life to all the members, so that should love ever fail, apostles would no longer preach the Gospel and martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. Finally, I realised that love includes every vocation, that love is all things, that love is eternal, reaching down through the ages and stretching to the uttermost limits of earth.

Beside myself with joy, I cried out: "O Jesus, my Love, my vocation is found at last—*my vocation is love!*" I have found my place in the bosom of the Church, and this place, O my God, Thou hast Thyself given to me: in the heart of the Church, my Mother, *I will be Love!* . . . Thus shall I be all things and my dream will be fulfilled.

But why say, "beside myself with joy," when it is rather peace that has become my portion, the calm, quiet peace of the sailor as he catches sight of the beacon which lights him to port? O luminous beacon of Love! I

[1] St. John of the Cross. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 31.

know how to reach even unto thy fires, I have found out the secret of making them my own!

I am but a weak and helpless child, but my very weakness makes me dare to offer myself, O Jesus, as victim to Thy Love. In olden days only pure and spotless holocausts would be accepted by the Omnipotent God, nor could His Justice be appeased save by the most perfect sacrifices; but now that the law of fear has given way to the law of love, I have been chosen, though a weak and imperfect creature, as Love's victim. And is not the choice a fitting one? Most surely, for in order that Love may be wholly satisfied, it must stoop even unto nothingness and transform that nothingness into fire.

"*Love is repaid by Love alone.*"[1] Well do I know it, my God! And therefore I have sought and have found a way to ease my heart by giving Thee love for love. "*Use the riches that make men unjust, to find yourselves friends who may receive you into everlasting dwellings.*"[2] This is the advice Thou gavest to Thy disciples after complaining that "*the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*"[3]

I was a child of light, and I understood that my desires of being all things, and of embracing every vocation, were riches that might well make me unjust; so I employed them in the making of friends. Mindful of the prayer of Eliseus when he asked the Prophet Elias for his double spirit, I presented myself before the company of the Angels and Saints, and spoke to them thus: "I am the least of all creatures, I know my worthlessness, but I also know how noble and generous hearts love to do good. Therefore, O blessed inhabitants of the Heavenly City, I entreat you to adopt me as your child. All the glory you may help me to acquire will be yours; deign, then, to hear my prayer and obtain for me a *double portion* of your love for God."

[1] Motto of Saint Thérèse, from St. John of the Cross. [Ed.]
[2] Cf. Luke xvi. 9. [3] Luke xvi. 8.

A Canticle of Love

I dare not try to understand all that my prayer means, O my God! I should fear to be crushed by the mere weight of its audacity. That I am Thy *child* is my only excuse, for children do not grasp the full meaning of their words. Yet, if their parents were to mount a throne and inherit vast wealth, they would not hesitate to grant the desires of their little ones, who are dearer to them than life itself. To please them they would spend most lavishly, stooping even to weakness.

But the Church is a queen because she is Thy spouse, Divine King of kings, and I am a child of Holy Church. I do not ask for riches or glory, not even for the glory of Heaven—that belongs by right to my brothers the Angels and Saints. My own glory will be the reflection of the radiance that streams from the brow of my Mother, the Church. But I ask for *love*. One thought is mine henceforth, dear Jesus, it is to *love Thee!* Great deeds are forbidden me. I can neither preach the Gospel nor shed my blood . . . but what does it matter? My brothers labour in my stead while I, *a little child*, stay close to the Throne and love Thee for all those who are in the strife.

But how shall I show my love, since love proves itself by deeds? I, the little one, will strew flowers, perfuming the Divine Throne with their fragrance. I will sing Love's canticle in silvery tones. Thus will my short life be spent in Thy sight, O my Beloved! To strew flowers is the only means of proving my love, and these flowers will be each word and look, each little daily sacrifice. I wish to make profit out of the smallest actions and do them all for Love. For Love's sake I wish to suffer and to rejoice: so shall I strew my flowers. Not one that I see but, singing all the while, I will scatter its petals before Thee. Should my roses be gathered from amid thorns, I will sing notwithstanding, and the longer and sharper the thorns, the sweeter will grow my song.

But of what avail to Thee are my flowers and my

songs, dear Jesus? . . . Of what avail? I know well that this fragrant shower, these petals of little price, these songs of love from a poor little heart like mine, will nevertheless be pleasing to Thee. They are but trifles, it is true, yet Thou wilt smile on them. The Church Triumphant, stooping towards her child, will gather up these scattered rose-leaves, and, placing them in Thy divine hands, that they may acquire an infinite value, will shower them on the Church Suffering to extinguish the flames, and on the Church Militant to make her triumph.

My Jesus, I love Thee! I love my Mother the Church, and I bear in mind that "the least act of pure love is of more value to her than all other works together."[1] But does this pure love really exist in my heart? Are not my boundless desires mere dreams, mere folly? If so, I beseech Thee, enlighten me, for Thou knowest I seek only the truth. If my desires be too bold, deliver me from them, for they are the most grievous of all martyrdoms. Yet I confess that should I fail to reach one day the heights to which my soul aspires, I shall have tasted more sweetness in my martyrdom, in my folly, than I shall taste in eternal bliss—unless by a miracle Thou shouldst take from me all memory of the hopes I cherished upon earth. Jesus! Jesus! if the mere desire of Thy Love awaken such delight, what must it be to possess and enjoy it for ever?

How can a soul so imperfect as mine aspire to the plenitude of Love? What is the key to this mystery? O my only Friend!—why dost Thou not reserve these infinite longings for lofty souls, for the eagles that soar in the heights? Alas! I am only a little unfledged bird. Yet the eagle's spirit is mine, and notwithstanding my littleness I dare to gaze upon the Divine Sun of Love, I burn to dart upwards unto its fires. Fain would I fly as the eagle does, but I can only flutter my wings—it is beyond my feeble strength to soar.

[1] St. John of the Cross.

What then is to become of me? Must I die of sorrow because of my helplessness? Oh, no! I will not even grieve. With daring confidence, and reckless of self, I will remain there till death, my gaze fixed upon the Divine Sun. Nothing shall affright me, neither wind nor rain; and should impenetrable clouds conceal from my eyes the Orb of Love, should it seem to me that beyond this life there is darkness only, this would be the hour of perfect joy, the hour in which to urge my confidence to its uttermost bounds, for knowing that beyond the dark clouds my Sun is still shining, I should never dare to change my place.

O my God, thus far do I understand Thy Love for me, but Thou knowest how often I lose sight of what is my only care, and straying from Thy side allow my wings to be draggled in the muddy pools of this world. Then "*I cry like a young swallow*"[1] and my cry tells Thee all, and Thou dost remember, O Infinite Mercy, that "*Thou didst not come to call the just but sinners.*"[2]

Yet, shouldst Thou still remain deaf to the plaintive cries of Thy feeble creature, shouldst Thou still veil Thyself, I am content to remain benumbed with cold, my wings bedraggled, and once more I would rejoice in such well-merited suffering. O Divine Sun, I am happy to feel myself so small and frail in Thy presence, and my heart is at peace . . . for I know that all the eagles of Thy celestial court have pity on me, that they guard and defend me, putting to flight the vultures—the demons that would fain devour me. I fear not these demons, for I am not destined to be their prey, but the prey of the Divine Eagle.

O Eternal Word! O my Saviour! Thou art the Divine Eagle whom I love and who allurest me. Thou who, descending to this land of exile, didst will to suffer and to die, in order to bear away each single soul and plunge it into the very heart of the Blessed Trinity—Love's eternal Home! Thou who, returning to Thy

[1] Isa. xxxviii. 14.

[2] Cf. Matt. ix. 13.

realm of light, dost still remain hidden here in our vale of tears under the semblance of the white Host to nourish me with Thy own substance. Forgive me, O Jesus, if I tell Thee that Thy Love reacheth even unto madness, and at the sight of such folly what wilt Thou but that my own heart should leap up to Thee? How could my trust know any bounds?

I know well that for Thy sake the Saints have made themselves foolish—being "eagles" they have done great things. Too little for such mighty deeds, my folly lies in the hope that Thy Love accepts me as a victim, and in my confidence that the Angels and Saints will help me to fly unto Thee with Thy own wings, O my Divine Eagle! As long as Thou willest I shall remain with my gaze fixed upon Thee, for I long to be *fascinated* by Thy divine eyes, I long to become Love's prey. I am filled with the hope that one day Thou wilt swoop down upon me, and bearing me away to the source of all Love, wilt plunge me at last into its glowing abyss, that I may become for ever its happy victim.

O Jesus! would that I could tell all *little souls* of Thy ineffable condescension! If by any possibility Thou couldst find one weaker than mine, one which should abandon itself with perfect trust to Thy Infinite Mercy, I feel that Thou wouldst take delight in loading that soul with still greater favours. But whence these desires, O my Spouse, to make known the secrets of Thy Love? Is it not Thou alone who hast taught them to me and canst Thou not likewise reveal them to others? I know that Thou canst and I beseech Thee to do so. . . .

I BESEECH THEE TO CAST THY GLANCE UPON A VAST NUMBER OF LITTLE SOULS: I ENTREAT THEE TO CHOOSE IN THIS WORLD A LEGION OF LITTLE VICTIMS WORTHY OF THY LOVE.

END OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

EPILOGUE :

MARTYRDOM AND DEATH
PROCESS OF CANONISATION
THE PAPAL DOCUMENTS

EPILOGUE

PART I

MARTYRDOM AND DEATH OF SAINT THÉRÈSE

"MANY pages of this story"—said its writer—"will never be read upon earth." There are sufferings which may not be disclosed here below, Our Lord having jealously reserved to Himself the right to reveal their merit in the vision where all veils shall be drawn aside. The sufferings of Saint Thérèse were nearly all of this hidden nature, insomuch that to many her life may seem to have been a story of smiles and caresses—the story of a flower that has seen only spring-day suns, but has not lived through autumn rains or wintry blasts. On the contrary, the Servant of God suffered intensely, and towards the close of her life she suggested that the fact should be made known after her death, well aware that the seal of the cross would be for many the authentic sign of her mission.

It was not, however, this searching martyrdom of the heart which made her think that the offering of herself as a *Victim of God's Merciful Love* had been accepted. She felt assured of the acceptance of the holocaust because of the "floods of love overflowing into her soul from the Heart of God." It is true that in answer to the needs of certain of His spouses who were not sufficiently pliable in the Divine Hands, she once said: "to offer ourselves as Love's victim is to lay ourselves open to every kind of pain." But she also said to another soul which seemed to her the figure of regenerated humanity thirsting after perfection yet trembling at the sight of the cross: "Why fear to offer yourself as a

victim to God's Merciful Love? If it were to His Divine Justice you might have reason to fear, but the *Merciful* Love will have pity on your weakness and will treat you with tenderest *mercy*."

We have seen how great was her sacrifice in leaving her dearly-loved home. Some may think that the companionship of her two sisters in the convent made the sacrifice less painful. Instead of this, their presence afforded the young postulant many occasions for repressing her affection—a form of self-denial most keenly felt. The rules of solitude and silence were strictly observed and she saw her sisters only at recreation. Had she been less mortified she might often have sat beside them, but no one could remark in her any special affection for them, since "by preference she sought the company of those religious who were least agreeable to her."

Some time after she entered, her appointment as "aid" to Sister Agnes of Jesus brought fresh occasions of sacrifice. Saint Thérèse knew all unnecessary conversation was forbidden, and therefore she never allowed herself the slightest word in the way of personal confidences. "O my dear Mother," she said later, "how much I suffered then! . . . I could not open my heart to you and I thought you no longer knew me." After five years of this heroic silence Sister Agnes of Jesus was chosen as Prioress. On the evening of the election her child might well have rejoiced that henceforth she could speak freely and as of old pour out her soul. God permitted, however, that of all the community Saint Thérèse saw least of her who was now "doubly her Mother." So strong was her sense of the supernatural, that on her deathbed she declared herself "happy to die in the arms of another Prioress, in order to exercise more fully her spirit of faith in authority."

She wished to live the life of the Carmel with all the perfection required by St. Teresa, and when her work did not necessarily absorb her attention the thought of

God presented itself quite naturally. On one occasion, a novice entering her cell was struck by the heavenly expression of her countenance. Though sewing most industriously she seemed lost in contemplation. "What are you thinking of?" the young Sister asked. "I am meditating on the 'Our Father,'" Thérèse replied. "It is so sweet to call God 'Our Father!'" . . . and tears glistened in her eyes. Another time she was heard to say: "I cannot understand what more I shall have in Heaven than I have now; I shall see God, it is true, but, as to being with Him, our union is already complete."

On another occasion she related the following incident: "A few days after the oblation of myself to God's Merciful Love I was in the choir, beginning the Way of the Cross, when suddenly I felt myself wounded by a dart of fire so ardent that I thought I should die. I cannot describe the transport, and no comparison would convey an idea of the intensity of the flame. It seemed as though an invisible force plunged me wholly into fire. . . . But what fire! what sweetness!"

When the Mother Prioress asked her if this were the first rapture she had experienced, she answered quite simply: "I have had several transports of love, and one in particular during my novitiate, when I remained for a whole week far removed from the world. It is impossible for me to explain it, but it seemed as though I went about my work with a body other than my own, and that a veil had been cast over all earthly things. But I was not then consumed by a real flame; I was able to bear it all, without hope of seeing the ties that bound me to life give way under the weight of joy; whilst on the occasion of which I speak, one minute, one second longer, and my soul must have left the body. . . . Alas! I found myself again on earth, and spiritual dryness once more took possession of my heart." Jesus had withdrawn the fiery dart,[1] but the wound was unto

[1] The great St. Teresa of Avila (Spain), reformer of the Carmelites, who completed her autobiography in 1562 at the command of her confessor, gives there an account of the following vision. I saw—

death, and for the Victim of Love the "*eternal weight of glory*" was not to be long delayed.

Through this close union with Almighty God she acquired a remarkable mastery over self, while in the garden of her soul every virtue flourished. Let us not imagine, however, that all these flowers grew and blossomed without effort on her part.

"In this world there is no fruitfulness without suffering—either physical pain, anguish of soul, or trials known sometimes only to God. When good thoughts and generous resolutions have been the result of our reading the lives of the Saints, we ought not to content ourselves, as in the case of profane books, with paying a certain tribute of admiration to the genius of their authors—rather should we consider the price which, doubtless, they paid for the supernatural good produced in our souls."[1]

And, if to-day "*the little Saint*," as she is so often styled, transforms countless hearts in an amazing way, if the good she does on earth is beyond reckoning, we may well believe she bought it all at the price with which Jesus bought back our souls—suffering and the cross. Not the least of these sufferings was the war she waged against herself, refusing every satisfaction to the demands of her naturally proud and impetuous nature. While still a child she had acquired the habit of never excusing herself or making a complaint, and in Carmel she strove to be the servant of her Sisters in

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she says—an angel very near me in bodily form, an unusual thing, for though angels are often represented to me it is only by intellectual vision. He was rather small and very beautiful, and his face shone so brilliantly that he appeared to be one of the seraphim who look all on fire with divine love. He had in his hand a long golden dart—tipped, I thought, with fire—which he seemed to me to thrust several times through my heart, leaving me wholly inflamed with a great love of God.

The Saint died in 1582, and while her body lies incorrupt at Alba de Tormes, her heart, bearing distinctly the mark of the fiery dart, is preserved at Avila. Her *Story of my own Life* is considered the most important work of its kind after the *Confessions of St. Augustine*. [ED.]

[1] Dom Guéranger.

religion, endeavouring in the same spirit of humility to obey all without distinction.

One evening, during her illness, the community had assembled in the garden to sing a hymn before an altar of the Sacred Heart. Our Saint, who was already wasted by fever, joined them with difficulty, and arriving quite exhausted, was obliged to sit down. When the hymn began, one of the Sisters made her a sign to stand. Without hesitation the humble child rose, and in spite of the fever and great oppression from which she was suffering, remained standing to the end.

The infirmarian had advised her to take a little walk in the garden for a quarter of an hour each day, and this recommendation was for her a command. Noticing one afternoon how much the effort cost the invalid, a Sister said to her: "Sœur Thérèse, you would do much better to take a rest; walking can do you no good when you are suffering so much, you are only tiring yourself." "That is true," she replied, "but do you know what gives me strength? I offer each step for some missionary, thinking that somewhere far away, one of them is worn out by his apostolic labours, and to lessen his fatigue I offer mine to God."

One year the Sisters' relatives, as also the servants of the convent, had sent bunches of flowers for the Mother Prioress's feast. Thérèse was arranging them with great taste when a lay-sister said to her crossly: "It is easy to see that these larger bouquets were sent by your family; of course, those sent by the poor will be hidden behind!" A sweet smile was the only reply, and notwithstanding the unpleasing effect she put the flowers given by the servants in the most conspicuous place. Struck with admiration, the lay-sister went at once to the Prioress to accuse herself of her unkindness and to praise the humility shown by the Saint. When after the latter's death the body was laid out, this Sister touched the sacred remains with her forehead, once more asking forgiveness of her fault. At the same instant she felt

herself cured of a cerebral anæmia which had for years prevented her from applying herself either to reading or to mental prayer.

Far from avoiding humiliations, our Saint sought them with eagerness, and it was in this way she came to offer herself as "aid" to a Sister who was well known to be difficult to please. The proposal was accepted, and one day, after she had been tried by a great deal of fault-finding, a novice asked her why she looked so bright. Great was the novice's surprise on receiving the reply: "It is because Sister N. has just been saying disagreeable things to me. She has made me so happy! I wish I could meet her now so that I might give her a smile." . . . She was still speaking when the Sister in question knocked at the door and the astonished novice could see for herself how the Saints forgive. But the Little White Flower of Jesus soared so far above earthly things that humiliations served only to strengthen her.

To all these virtues she joined an unflinching courage. From her entrance into Carmel, at the age of fifteen, she was allowed to follow all the practices of its austere Rule, the fasts alone excepted. Sometimes her companions in the novitiate, seeing how pale she looked, tried to obtain a dispensation for her either from attendance at Matins, or from rising at the usual hour in the morning, but the Mother Prioress[1] would never yield to these requests. "A soul of such mettle," she would say, "ought not to be dealt with as a child; dispensations are not meant for her. Let her be, for God sustains her. Besides, if she be really ill she should come and tell me herself." But it was always a principle with the Saint that "we should go to the end of our strength before we complain." How many times did she not assist at Matins suffering from vertigo or violent headaches! "I am still able to walk," she would say, "and so I ought to be at my post." Thanks to this undaunted energy, she performed acts that were heroic.

[1] Rev. M. Mary of Gonzaga, who died December 17, 1904, aged 71. [CARMEL.]

It was with difficulty that her delicate stomach accustomed itself to the frugal fare of Carmel.[1] Certain dishes made her ill, but she knew so well how to hide this fact that no one ever suspected it. One of the Sisters who sat near to her at table tells how she had tried in vain to discover the dishes Saint Thérèse preferred. The kitchen Sisters, too, finding her easy to please, invariably served her with whatever was left, and it was only during her last illness, when she was put under obedience to say what disagreed with her, that her mortifications came to light. After admitting how she had been tried, she added: "When Our Lord will have us suffer, there can be no evading it. For instance, when Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart[2] was procuratrix she looked after me with a mother's tenderness. To all appearances I was pampered, and yet endless were the mortifications she imposed upon me by serving me according to her own taste which was entirely different from mine."

Her generous spirit of self-sacrifice extended to everything; she always sought what was painful and disagreeable as her rightful share, and all that God asked of her she gave Him without hesitation or reserve. "During my postulantship," she confessed, "it cost me a great deal to perform certain exterior penances customary in our convents, but I never yielded to my repugnance, for it seemed as though from the great crucifix in our garden Christ looked at me with beseeching eyes and begged these sacrifices." Her vigilance was such that she never failed to observe any little recommendations of the Mother Prioress, or any of the smaller rules which render the religious life so meritorious. Having remarked her extraordinary fidelity on this point, one of the old nuns regarded her ever afterwards as a Saint.

Inspired by the Holy Ghost with the knowledge that mortification of the mind and heart sanctifies much more surely than bodily penances, she practised but few of

[1] Carmelites never touch meat. [ED.]

[2] Marie, her eldest sister.

these beyond such as were prescribed by the Rule. It happened, nevertheless, that she fell ill through having worn for too long a time a small penitential cross, the sharp iron points of which had entered into her flesh. "Such a trifle would not have caused this," she said, "if God had not wished to make me understand that the great austerities of the Saints are not meant for me or for the little souls who are to walk by the same path of spiritual childhood."

It was the want of a fire in winter that caused her the greatest physical suffering, and it is easy to understand how a delicate constitution such as hers would be tried by the long Norman winters and the damp climate of Lisieux. When the temperature was lower than usual and she had spent the day half-frozen with cold, she would go in the evening, after Matins, to warm herself for a few moments in the community-room. To make her way thence to her cell, she had to walk some sixty yards in the open air, under the cloisters, then, climbing the staircase, traverse a long icy corridor, so that by the time she reached her room the little heat she had so grudgingly allowed herself to gain was utterly lost. As she lay on her straw mattress, with two thin blankets for covering, sleep came to her only in snatches. Sometimes indeed it happened that she would pass the entire night shivering without ever falling asleep. If, from the beginning, she had told the Novice Mistress, a remedy would at once have been provided, but she preferred to accept this stern penance without uttering a complaint. It was only on her deathbed that she revealed it, in these expressive words: "Throughout my religious life the cold has caused me more physical pain than anything else—I have suffered from cold until I almost died of it."

Though in her spirit of generosity she had embraced this austere penance with joy, she subsequently made known with due respect that such excessive suffering, though permitted by God, was not willed by Him, and

that in future it would be well to guard against it. She considered that while the Rule should be enforced, differences of latitude and of constitution should be studied, and that to act otherwise was to sin against prudence and to tempt God.

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The reader will remember the call on Good Friday, April 3, 1896, when, to use her own expression, she heard "the distant murmur which announced the approach of the Bridegroom." But before the hour of her deliverance was to sound, long months of pain had still to be endured. On Good Friday morning she made so little of the hæmorrhage of the previous night that the Mother Prioress, blind to the real state of things, allowed her to practise all the penances the Rule prescribes for that day. In the afternoon, when a novice saw her cleaning a window, her face was livid, and in spite of the energy displayed it was evident that her strength was almost spent. At the sight of such exhaustion the novice, who dearly loved her young mistress, burst into tears and begged permission to obtain for her some little reprieve, but Saint Thérèse strictly forbade it, saying she was well able to bear this slight fatigue on the day when Our Lord had suffered so much for her. It was only in May, 1897, that her own sisters knew of this first warning, and when Mother Agnes of Jesus gently reproached her for keeping silent, the invalid exclaimed: "My poor little Mother, you must thank God I did not tell you, for had you been aware of my state and seen me so little cared for, your heart would have been very sore."

Soon, a persistent cough made the Mother Prioress feel anxious; she ordered the Saint a more strengthening diet and for some months the cough ceased. "Sickness is too slow a liberator," said the sufferer, "I can rely only on Love." Strongly tempted to respond to an appeal from the Carmelites of Hanoï, who were most desirous

of possessing her, she began a novena to the Venerable Théophane Vénard[1] to obtain her cure, but instead of getting better, she took a serious turn for the worse.

Like her Divine Master she had "*passed through the world doing good*"; like Him she had been forgotten and misunderstood, and now, still following in His footsteps, she was to climb the painful hill of Calvary. Accustomed to see her always suffering yet always brave, the Mother Prioress allowed her to take part in the community exercises, some of which caused her extreme fatigue. At night she would courageously mount the stairs alone, pausing at every step to take breath. When after much difficulty she at last reached her cell, she was so exhausted that sometimes, as she admitted later, it took her an hour to undress. After all this exertion it was on a hard pallet that she had to take her rest. Her nights were very bad, and on being asked if she would not like some help during those hours of pain, she replied: "Oh, no! I am only too glad to be in a cell where the Sisters cannot hear me. I am delighted to suffer alone—the moment I receive sympathy and am loaded with attentions I am no longer happy."

It often happened that painful remedies had to be applied to her side, and one day, having suffered from them more than usual, she was resting in her cell during

[1] The Blessed Théophane Vénard was born at St. Loup, in the diocese of Poitiers, on the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, November 21, 1829. He was martyred at Kecho, Tong-King, on the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, February 2, 1861, at the age of thirty-two. A long and delightful correspondence with his family, begun in his college days and completed from his "cage" at Kecho, reveals a kinship of poesy as well as of sanctity and of love of home between the two "spring flowers." The beauty of his soul was so visible in his boyish face that he was spared all torture during his two months in the "cage." In 1909, the year in which Sœur Thérèse became "Servant of God" by the commencement of the Episcopal Process, Père Vénard received the honours of Beatification. His relics repose in the Foreign Missionary Seminary, Rue du Bac, Paris.

Another child of France—Joan, its "Martyr-Maid"—whose praises have been sung in affectionate verse by the Saints of St. Loup and Lisieux, was beatified that same year.

Joan has since been canonised, and Cardinal Touchet, her intrepid champion, came to Lisieux in 1923 to testify publicly that he owed to St. Thérèse the triumph of the Maid's Cause. [Ed.]

recreation, when she overheard a Sister in the kitchen saying: "Sœur Thérèse will not live long, and really I wonder sometimes what our Mother Prioress will find to say about her when she dies.[1] She will be greatly puzzled, for though the little Sister is very good she has certainly never done anything worth speaking about." The infirmarian, who had also overheard what was said, turned to the Saint and remarked: "If you relied on the opinion of creatures you would certainly be disillusioned to-day." "The opinion of creatures!" she replied, "happily God has given me the grace to be absolutely indifferent to it. Let me tell you something that showed me once and for all how much it is worth. A few days after my clothing I went to our Mother's room. 'Mother,' remarked a lay-sister who happened to be there, 'this novice certainly does you credit. How well she looks! I hope she may long be able to observe the Rule.' I was feeling really pleased at the compliment when another Sister came in, and looking at me, said: 'Poor Sœur Thérèse, how very tired you look, you quite alarm me. If you continue like this I am afraid you will not be able to keep the Rule very long.' I was then only sixteen, but the incident made such an impression on me, that I never again set store on the variable opinion of creatures."

On another occasion someone remarked: "They say that you have never suffered much." With a smile she pointed to a glass in which there was some medicine of a bright red colour. "Do you see this little glass?" she said. "One would suppose it contained a most delicious draught, whereas in reality it is more bitter than anything I take. Well, it is the image of my life. To others it has been all rose colour; they imagine that I have drunk of a most delicious wine, but to me it has been full of bitterness. I say bitterness, yet, after all,

[1] An allusion to the obituary notice sent to the French Carmels when a Carmelite nun dies in France. In the case of those who die in the odour of sanctity these notices sometimes run to considerable length. [Ed.]

my life has not been sad, because I have learned to find joy and sweetness in all that is bitter." "You are suffering just now, are you not?" "Yes," she answered, "but I have longed so much to suffer."

"How sorry we are," said her novices, "to see you in such pain, and to think you may have even more to suffer." "Do not grieve," she replied, "it has come to this, that I can no longer suffer, because all suffering is sweet. Besides it is a great mistake to worry as to what trouble there may be in store; it is like meddling with God's work. We who run in the way of Love must never allow ourselves to be disturbed by anything. If I did not simply suffer from one moment to another, it would be impossible for me to be patient; but I look only at the present, I forget the past, and I take good care not to forestall the future. When we yield to discouragement or despair it is usually because we give too much thought to the past and to the future. Pray for me, however; often, when I cry to Heaven for help, it is then I feel most abandoned."

"How do you manage," continued the novices, "not to give way to discouragement when you are forsaken in this way?" "I turn to God and to all His Saints, and I thank them notwithstanding; I believe they want to see how far I shall trust them. But the words of Job have not entered my heart in vain: '*Even if God should kill me, I would still trust Him.*'[1] I admit that it has taken a long time to arrive at this degree of self-abandonment; but I have reached it now, and it is Our Lord Himself who has brought me there."

"Our Lord's will," she confessed, "fills my heart to the brim, and if anything else be added it cannot penetrate to any depth, but, like oil on the surface of limpid waters, glides easily across. If my heart were not already brimming over, if it needed to be filled by the feelings of joy and sadness that follow each other so rapidly, then indeed it would be flooded by bitter

[1] Cf. Job xiii. 15.

sorrow; but these quick-succeeding changes scarcely ruffle the surface of my soul, and in its depths there reigns a peace that nothing can disturb." Yet her soul was enveloped in thick darkness, and her temptations against Faith, always conquered but always returning, robbed her of all feeling of happiness at the thought of her approaching death. "Were it not for this trial, which is impossible to understand," she would say, "I think I should die of joy at the thought of soon leaving the world." By this means, however, the Divine Master wished to put the finishing touches to her purification, and thus enable her not only to walk rapidly, but to run in her little way of confidence and abandonment. Have we not her own words for it? "I desire neither death nor life. Were Our Lord to offer me my choice, I would not choose. I only will what He wills, and I am pleased with whatever He does. I have no fear of the last struggle, or of any pain, however great, which my illness may bring. God has always been my help; He has led me by the hand since I was a child and I count on Him now. Even though suffering should reach its furthest limits I am certain He will never forsake me."

Of necessity her confidence in God roused the fury of the devil, who tries by every ruse to sow the seeds of despair in the hearts of the dying. "Last night I was seized with a terrible feeling of anguish," she once said to Mother Agnes of Jesus. "I was lost in darkness, from out of which came an accursed voice: 'Are you certain God loves you? Has He come to tell you so Himself? The opinion of a few creatures will not justify you in His sight.' These thoughts had long tortured me, dear Mother, when your little note came like a message from Heaven. You recalled the special graces Jesus had lavished on me, and, as though you had been given a revelation concerning my trial, you told me I was dearly loved by God, and was on the eve of receiving from His hands my eternal crown. Peace

and calm revived in my heart. Then the thought occurred that it was perhaps your affection which prompted you to write thus. Straightway I was inspired to take up the Gospels, and opening the book at random, I lighted upon a passage which had hitherto escaped me: '*He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, for God doth not give the Spirit by measure.*'[1] I fell asleep, fully consoled. It is you, dear Mother, whom God has sent me, and I must believe you, because your words are the Words of God."

For several days during August she seemed, so to speak, beside herself, and implored that prayers might be offered for her. We had never before seen her in such a state, and we heard her constantly repeating: "If people only knew how necessary it is to pray for those in their agony!" One night she entreated the infirmarian to sprinkle her bed with Holy Water, saying: "The devil is beside me. I do not see him but I feel him; he torments me, holding me with a grip of iron that I may not find one crumb of comfort, and adding to my sufferings that I may be driven to despair. . . . And I cannot pray. I can only look at Our Blessed Lady, I can only say, 'Jesus!' How necessary is that prayer we use at Compline:

> 'Far off let idle visions fly,
> No phantom of the night come nigh!'

Something mysterious is happening within me. I am not suffering for myself but for some other soul, and Satan is angry." The startled infirmarian lighted a blessed candle, and the spirit of darkness fled, never to return; but until the end the sufferer remained in a state of extreme anguish.

One day while she was contemplating the beautiful heavens, someone said to her: "Your home will soon be there, beyond the blue sky. How lovingly you look at it!" She only smiled, but afterwards she said

[1] John iii. 34.

to Mother Agnes of Jesus: "Mother, the Sisters do not realise my sufferings. Just now, when I was looking at the sky, I was merely admiring the beauty of the material heaven—the real Heaven seems more than ever closed against me. At first their words troubled me, but an interior voice whispered: 'Yes, you were looking to Heaven out of love. Since your soul is entirely delivered up to love, all your actions, even the most indifferent, are marked with this divine seal.' I was consoled immediately."

In spite of the darkness which enveloped the heroic child, Our Divine Saviour sometimes left the door of her prison ajar, and in those moments her soul was consumed in transports of confidence and love. Once when she was walking in the garden, supported by one of her own sisters, she stood still to watch a little white hen sheltering its chickens under its wing. Her eyes filled with tears and turning to her sister she remarked: "I cannot remain here any longer, let us go in!" Even when she reached her cell the tears continued to fall, and it was some time before she could speak. At last she said, looking at her sister with a heavenly expression: "I was thinking of Our Lord and of the touching comparison He chose in order to bring home to us how tender He is. All my life long He has done that for me—He has completely hidden me under His wing. I cannot tell you all that has just stirred my heart; it is indeed well for me that God conceals Himself, only rarely allowing me to see the effects of His Mercy, and, as it were, from 'behind the lattices.'[1] Otherwise I could never survive the sweetness."

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Unable to resign ourselves to the thought of losing our treasure, we began a fervent novena to Our Lady of Victories, June 5, 1897, in the hope that once again she would miraculously raise the drooping White

[1] Cant. ii. 9.

Flower. But her answer was the same as that given by the blessed martyr, Théophane Vénard, and we were forced to accept the bitter prospect of an approaching separation. At the beginning of July, her state became very serious, and she was at last removed to the infirmary. Looking at the empty room to which she knew her sister would never return, Mother Agnes of Jesus remarked: "When you are no longer with us, how sad I shall feel as I look at your cell!" "For consolation, little Mother, you must think of how happy I am in Heaven, and remember that a great deal of my happiness was acquired in this cell; for," she added, raising her beautiful eyes to Heaven, "*I have suffered so much in it* that I should be glad to die there."

The miraculous statue of Our Lady had been brought to the infirmary, and as the invalid entered the room her eyes turned towards it. It would be impossible to describe that look. "What is it you see?" asked her sister Marie, who had witnessed her miraculous cure as a child. "Never has she seemed to me more beautiful," was the reply, "but to-day it is the statue, whereas that other day you know well it was not!" "How I love Our Blessed Lady!" she exclaimed one evening. "How I would have sung her praises had I been a priest! She is spoken of as unapproachable, whereas she should be represented as imitable. . . . She is more Mother than Queen! I have heard preachers say her splendour eclipses that of all the Saints just as the rising sun makes the stars disappear. How strange that a mother should take away the glory of her children! I think quite the contrary will happen, I am certain she will greatly add to the splendour of God's redeemed. . . . Our Mother Mary! How simple was her life!" and the "Little Flower of Jesus and Mary" went on to draw a picture of the Holy Family such that all present were lost in admiration.

Before going to join her Spouse a heavy trial awaited her. From August 16 till the day of her death, Sep-

tember 30, she was unable to receive Holy Communion because of her continual sickness. Yet few have hungered for the Bread of Angels as did this seraph of earth;[1] again and again during the last winter of her life she had heroically risen at an early hour to partake of the Heavenly Manna, even after nights spent in almost intolerable pain. No price was too high for the bliss of being united to her God. Previous to the great trial of being deprived of her Divine Food, Our Lord visited her often upon her bed of suffering. Her Communion on July 16, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, was particularly touching. During the previous night she composed the following lines which were to be sung before she received the Blessed Sacrament:

[1] The preparation for her First Communion lasted four long years. According to custom Thérèse had to reach the age of eleven during the year of her First Communion. "Had I been born but two days earlier," she said, lamenting, "Jesus would have come to me a whole year sooner." When quite a little child she wept at seeing her sisters approach Holy Communion without her. "Do let me follow you!" she once said to Marie; "no one would notice, there are so many people going."

Having at length received her Lord, she longed to receive Him as her Daily Bread, and it is worthy of note that she prayed most fervently for the revival of the ancient custom, then obsolete, of the faithful communicating each time they assisted at the Holy Sacrifice. It cannot be doubted that her intercession had its influence on the great Eucharistic Decrees of Pius X. On her deathbed she promised to obtain for the Carmel the privilege of Daily Communion, and after her death the favour was granted without delay. Her Canonisation occurred on the feast of the patron of all Eucharistic works, St. Paschal Baylon.

The office of sacristan brought her an extraordinary joy. She regretted all her life her exclusion from the priesthood, and on that account was "delighted to die before the age at which ordination usually takes place." She rejoiced greatly in the fact that a virgin, St. Barbara, communicated St. Stanislaus Kostka. "Why not a priest, or an angel?" she said. "We shall see such wonders in Heaven! I imagine that those who have desired the priesthood in this world will enjoy its privileges in the next." (Cf. *Spirit of St. Thérèse.*)

The writer remembers well the deep impression made on Mgr. de Teil, the faithful vice-postulator of her Cause of Beatification, by the words of the Pope of the Eucharist, Pius X, after his perusal of a letter of the youthful Thérèse to her cousin Marie concerning Frequent Communion. "*Opportunissimo!*" he repeated twice, adding: "Oh, this is a great joy to me. We must have this Process of Beatification quickly dispatched."

Lastly, one has but to consult the volumes of her *Roses* to learn how she continues in Heaven her crusade on behalf of the Blessed Sacrament, and the favours published are a very small part of the Eucharistic "shower." [Ed.]

"Thou know'st my littleness beyond all word,
Yet fearest not to stoop to me.
Come to my heart, mine own beloved Lord,
Come to my heart athirst for Thee!
And when Thou comest, straightway let me die,
Dear God! of love's own dart!
Oh, hearken, Jesus, to my suppliant cry:
Come to my heart!"

In the morning, when the Holy Viaticum was carried to the infirmary, the cloisters were thickly strewn with rose-petals and wild flowers. A young priest, who was to say his first Mass that same day in the chapel of the Carmel, bore the Blessed Sacrament to the dying Sister, while at her request, Sister Mary of the Eucharist—whose voice was exceptionally sweet—sang the following couplet from a favourite hymn composed long before:

"Sweet martyrdom! to die of love's keen fire:
The martyrdom of which my heart is fain!
Hasten, ye Cherubim, to tune your lyre;
I shall not linger long in exile's pain!

* * * * *

Fulfil my dream, O Jesus, since I sigh
Of love to die."

A few days later the dear invalid grew worse, and on July 30 she received the last anointing. Radiant with delight she said to us: "The door of my dark prison is ajar; I am overcome with joy, especially since our Father Superior has assured me that to-day my soul is like that of a little child after Baptism." Two long months of martyrdom, however, had yet to run their course. "I entreat you, Mother, give me leave to die," she said to the Prioress. "Let me offer my life for such an intention"—which she named. And when the permission was refused, she replied: "Well, I know that just at this moment Our Lord has such a longing for a little bunch of grapes, which no one wants to give Him, that He will perforce have to come and steal it. . . . I ask

for nothing—that would be to stray from my path of self-surrender. All I do is to beseech Our Lady to remind Jesus of the title of *Thief*, which He takes to Himself in the Gospels, so that He may not forget to come and steal me away."

* * * * *

One day she took from a sheaf that had been brought her, an ear of corn so laden with grain that it bent on its stalk. After gazing upon it for some time she said to the Mother Prioress: "That ear of corn, dear Mother, is the image of my soul, which God has loaded with graces for me *and for many others*, and it is my earnest desire to bend always beneath the weight of His gifts, acknowledging that all comes from Him."

She was right. Her soul was indeed laden with graces, and it was easy to discern the Spirit of God speaking His praises out of the mouth of the innocent child. Had not the same Spirit of Truth dictated these words to the great Saint Teresa of Avila:

"Let those souls who have reached to a perfect union with God hold themselves in high esteem, with a humble and holy presumption. Let them keep unceasingly before their eyes the remembrance of the good things they have received, and beware of the thought that they are practising humility in not recognising the gifts of God. Is it not clear that the constant remembrance of gifts bestowed serves to increase the love for the giver? How can he who ignores the riches he possesses spend them generously upon others?"

But the above was not the only occasion upon which "little Thérèse of Lisieux"[1] gave utterance to words

[1] When asked before her death how they should pray to her in Heaven, the Saint made answer with her wonted simplicity: "You will call me 'Little Thérèse'—*petite Thérèse*." And at Gallipoli (Italy) on the occasion of her celebrated apparition in the Carmel there, when the Prioress took her to be St. Teresa of Avila, and addressed her as "our Holy Mother," the visitor replied, adopting her official title: "Nay, I am not our Holy Mother, *I am the Servant of God, Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*." This, her own French name of Thérèse, has been retained in the present translation, in order to prevent, by popularising it, all confusion with the reformer of Carmel, the Spanish

that proved prophetic. In the month of April, 1895, while she was still in excellent health, she confided to one of the elder nuns that she would soon die. "I do not say that it will be in a few months, but in two or three years at most; I know it by what is taking place in my soul." At times, to the novices' surprise, she read their intimate thoughts. "This is my secret," she told them; "I never reprimand you without first invoking Our Blessed Lady, asking her to inspire me with whatever will be for your greatest good. Often I am myself astonished at what I say, but as I say it I feel I make no mistake, and that it is Jesus who speaks by my lips." During her illness, one of her own sisters had experienced some moments of acute distress, amounting almost to depression, at the thought of the inevitable parting. She went straight to the infirmary, but was careful not to betray any sign of grief, and what was her surprise when the sufferer said to her in a sad and serious tone: "We ought not to weep like those who have no hope." "How happy I should be," thought one of our Mothers who had done her some trifling service on the occasion of a visit, "if this Saint would only say, 'I will repay you in Heaven!'" Simultaneously, the "Little Flower," turning to her, said: "Mother, I will repay you in Heaven!"

She had an evident consciousness of the mission on which Our Lord had sent her. The veil shutting out the future seemed lifted, and more than once she revealed to us its secrets, in prophecies which have already been realised: "I have never given God anything but love," she said to us, "it is with love He will repay:

AFTER MY DEATH
I WILL LET FALL A SHOWER OF ROSES."

St. Teresa of Jesus. The name of the "Little Flower," borrowed by St. Thérèse from the Blessed Théophane Vénard, and used so extensively in the pages of her manuscript, is the one by which she is best known in English-speaking lands. [Ed.]

At another time she interrupted a Sister who was speaking to her of the happiness of Heaven, by these sublime words: "It is not that which attracts me." "What is it, then?" asked the Sister. "Oh! it is Love! *To love, to be loved, and to return to earth to win love for our Love!*"[1] One evening when Mother Agnes of Jesus went to the infirmary, Sœur Thérèse welcomed her with an extraordinary expression of joy: "Mother!" she said, "some notes from a distant concert have just reached my ears, and there has come to me the thought that soon I shall be listening to the sweet melodies of Paradise. This thought, however, gave me only a moment's joy, for one hope alone makes my heart beat fast—the love I shall receive and the love I shall be able to give! I feel that my mission is soon to begin—to make others love God as I love Him . . . to teach souls my *little way*. . . .

I WILL SPEND MY HEAVEN
IN DOING GOOD UPON EARTH.

This is not impossible, for the Angels keep watch over us while they enjoy the Beatific Vision. No, there cannot be any rest for me till the end of the world—till the Angel shall have said: '*Time is no more.*'[2] Then I shall take my rest, then I shall be able to rejoice, because the number of the elect will be complete."[3]

[1] "You will look down on us from Heaven," they said to her. "No!" she replied, "*I will come down.*" That promise has been kept repeatedly since her death, by her visits to the tempted, the suffering, and the dying. Often, too, her presence has been distinctly felt, without any apparition being visible, and the spiritual grace or temporal favour follows, authenticating the "visit." At other times it is merely a sudden perfume of flowers, odour of incense, or some heavenly fragrance, that precedes or accompanies one of her innumerable "roses." There is frequently, too, a characteristic playfulness in the way in which she dispenses her favours. In her autobiography, however, St. Thérèse declares that she herself had no desire for such supernatural communications. [ED.]

[2] Apoc. x. 6.

[3] After a moment of silence she added: "Would God give me this ever-increasing desire to do good on earth after my death unless He wished to fulfil it? No, He would give me rather the longing to take my repose in Himself." (*Spirit of St. Thérèse.*) This unique and truly extraordinary prophecy was uttered on July 17, 1897. [ED.]

"And what is the '*little way*' that you would teach?" asked Mother Agnes of Jesus.

"IT IS THE WAY OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD, THE WAY OF TRUST AND ABSOLUTE SELF-SURRENDER.

I want to point out to souls the means that I have always found so completely successful, to tell them there is only one thing to do here below—to offer Our Lord the flowers of *little sacrifices* and win Him by our caresses. That is how I have won Him, and that is why I shall be made so welcome."

"Should I misguide you by my *little way* of love," she told her novices, "do not fear that I shall allow you to continue following it; I should very soon come back to earth and tell you to take another road.[1] But if I do not return, then believe in the truth of these words: *We can never have too much confidence in our God who is so mighty and so merciful. As we hope in Him so shall we receive.*"

On the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a novice said to her: "If you were to die to-morrow, after Holy Communion, I think I should be quite consoled—it would be such a beautiful death!" "Die after Holy Communion!" she answered quickly, "upon a great feast! No, such will never be my lot. Little souls could never imitate me in that. In my 'little way' everything is most ordinary, for all I do must likewise be within their reach."

When, as often happened, roses were sent to her, she would pluck their petals one by one, touching her crucifix lovingly with each. Once when some of these precious

[1] On January 16, 1910, during the first of her series of "visits" to the starving Carmelites of Gallipoli, in Italy, she said to the Prioress: "*My way is sure, and I was not mistaken in following it.*" From January to August gifts of money, miraculously conveyed, proved to a strict court of enquiry that St. Thérèse had indeed "come down." On January 16, 1911, she again sent a large sum to the Carmel of Gallipoli, approving in this way the Bishop of Nardo's interpretation of the words quoted above. See the chapter on "The Shower of Roses" for a full account of the apparitions.

relics fell to the ground she said to us: "Gather up those petals carefully, they will serve one day to give pleasure to others. Do not lose a single one." They have served indeed not only to give pleasure, but to work miracles.[1]

Another time she said to her "little Mother": "In Heaven I shall obtain many graces for those who have been kind to me. As for you, Mother, all I send will not suffice to repay you, but there will be much to make you rejoice."

A certain Sister had doubts as to the invalid's patience, but going to see her one day, and noticing that her face wore an expression of unearthly joy, she sought to know the reason. "It is because the pain is so acute," replied the Servant of God; "I have always forced myself to love suffering and to welcome it gladly."

"When I suffer much," she would say, "when painful and disagreeable things come my way, instead of looking sad I greet them with a smile. At first I did not always succeed, but now it has become a habit which I am truly glad to have acquired."

"Why are you so bright this morning?" asked Mother Agnes of Jesus. "Because of two little crosses I have received," she answered. "Nothing gives me such joy as 'little crosses' do." And on another occasion: "You have had many trials to-day?" "Yes, but I love them! . . . I love everything God in His goodness sends me." "Your sufferings are terrible!" "No, they are not terrible: can a victim of Love find anything terrible that is sent by her Spouse? At each moment He sends me what I am able to bear—nothing more—and if He increase the pain my strength is also increased. But I could never ask for greater sufferings—I am too little a soul; besides, being of my own choice I should

[1] Before the Canonisation over twenty-seven million souvenirs of the "Little Flower" had been distributed. The demand for first-class relics is unprecedented and is, of course, impossible to satisfy. Her Carfin shrine is happy to possess a piece of bone; also some of her hair, her Immaculate Conception rosary, an autograph prayer, a rose-petal, an artificial rose from her deathbed, and various other secondary relics. [ED.]

have to bear them without His help, and when left to myself I have never been fit for anything."

Thus spoke the wise and prudent virgin as she lay on her death-bed; her lamp, filled to the brim with the oil of virtue, burned brightly to the end. If, as the Holy Spirit reminds us in the Book of Proverbs: "*A man's doctrine is proved by his patience*,"[1] those who heard her may well believe in her doctrine, for she proved it by a patience which no test could overcome. At each visit the doctor expressed his admiration, assuring us that her sufferings were intense and that he had never seen anyone endure similar pain with such an expression of supernatural joy. We told him of our grief at the prospect of losing our treasure, but he replied: "I shall not be able to cure her, she was not made for this world." In view of her extreme weakness he ordered some strengthening remedies, and because of their cost the invalid was at first distressed, but afterwards she admitted: "I am no longer troubled at having to take these expensive medicines, for I have read that when they were given to St. Gertrude she was gladdened by the thought that it would all redound to the good of her benefactors, since Our Lord has said: '*Whatever you do to the least of My little ones, you do unto Me.*'"[2] "I am convinced that no remedies have the power to cure me," she added, "but I have made a covenant with God that they may be for the benefit of poor missionaries who have neither time nor means to take care of themselves."

Touched by the thoughtfulness of His spouse, Our Lord, who will never allow His generosity to be outdone, surrounded her with His loving attentions. At one time it would be in the form of flowers sent by some member of her family, at another in that of a little robin who would come and hop about her bed. "Mother," she would then say, "I feel deeply all these delicate proofs of God's love. Outwardly I am laden with them . . . nevertheless I remain in the deepest gloom! . . .

[1] Cf. Prov. xix. 11. [2] Matt. xxv. 40.

I am suffering intensely—most intensely—and yet amid it all I am in a state of extraordinary peace. All my longings have been realised . . . I am full of confidence." Shortly after this she related the following incident: "One evening, during the 'Great Silence,' when I was in high fever and parched with thirst, the infirmarian put a hot-water bottle to my feet and tincture of iodine on my chest. Whilst submitting to these remedies I could not help saying to Our Lord: 'My Jesus, Thou seest I am already burning, and they have brought me more heat and more fire. If instead, they had given me even half a glass of water, what comfort it would have been! My Jesus! Thy child is very thirsty! She is glad, however, to have this opportunity of resembling Thee more closely and thus of saving souls.' Presently the infirmarian left me, and I did not expect to see her again until morning. What then was my surprise when she returned with a refreshing drink! 'It has just struck me,' she said, 'that you may be thirsty, so for the future I shall bring you this every evening.' I looked at her in astonishment, and when I once more found myself alone, I could not keep back my tears. How good Our Lord is! How tender and loving! How easy it is to touch His Heart!"

On September 6, the sufferer received a proof of the love of the Divine Heart—a proof which sank deeply into her own. She had frequently expressed the wish to possess something which had belonged to her sainted friend, the Blessed Théophane Vénard, but finding that nothing came of her desire she said no more. That day, however, we received, quite providentially, a relic of the Saint, and when the Mother Prioress brought her the coveted treasure she kissed it repeatedly, and would not part with it. It may be wondered why she was so devoted to this young martyr. In an affectionate interview with her own sisters she explained her reason. "Théophane Vénard," she said, "is a *little* Saint, and his life was quite ordinary. He had an ardent love of

our Immaculate Mother, and likewise a great love for those at home." Dwelling on these last words, she added: "And I, too, love my family with a most tender love; I fail to understand those Saints who do not love their dear ones. As a parting gift, I have copied for you some passages from his last letters home. His soul and mine resemble each other, and his words re-echo my thoughts." We give here a copy of the letter, which might well have been composed by herself:

"Nothing on earth can make me happy, for the desires of my heart are too vast, and nothing of what the world calls happiness can satisfy it. Time for me will soon be no more; my thoughts are fixed on Eternity, and my heart is full of peace, like a tranquil lake or a cloudless sky. Thirsting for the waters of Life Eternal, I leave the world without regret. Yet a little while and my soul will have quitted this earth, will have finished her exile, will have ended her combat. Heaven is won. I am about to enter the abode of the Blessed—to see what eye hath never seen, to hear what ear hath never heard, to enjoy those things which the heart of man hath not conceived.

"I have reached the hour so coveted by us all. It is indeed true that God chooses *the little ones* to confound the great ones of the world, and I do not rely upon my own strength but upon Him who, on the Cross, vanquished the powers of hell. I am a spring flower which the Divine Master gathers for His pleasure. We are all flowers, planted upon earth, and God will gather us in His own good time—some sooner, some later. . . . I, a little flower that has lived but one day, am the first to be taken! But we shall meet again in Paradise, where we shall enjoy unending bliss.

"Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus,
using the words of the angelic martyr —Théophane Vénard."

Towards the end of September, when someone repeated to her a remark made at recreation concerning the responsibility of those who are entrusted with the care of souls, she seemed to revive for a few minutes and gave utterance to these beautiful words: "'*To him that is little, mercy is granted.*'[1] It is possible to remain *little*

[1] Wisdom vi. 7.

even in the most responsible position, and besides is it not written, that at the last day '*The Lord will arise and save the meek and lowly ones of the earth*'?[1] He does not say 'to judge' but 'to save!'"

Meanwhile the tide of pain was rising higher and higher, and Sœur Thérèse became so weak that she was unable to make the slightest movement without assistance. Even when those about her spoke in whispers it added greatly to her suffering, and the fever and oppression were so extreme that it was only with the greatest difficulty she could articulate a word. Yet a sweet smile was always on her lips. The one fear that would bring a cloud was lest she should give the Sisters any extra trouble, and until two days before her death she would never allow anyone to remain with her through the night. In spite of her entreaties, however, the infirmarian looked in from time to time. Finding her, on one of these occasions, with hands joined and eyes raised to Heaven, she asked: "What are you doing? You ought to try and get some sleep." "I cannot, Sister, I am suffering too much, so I pray." "And what do you say to Jesus?" "I say nothing—*I love Him!*"

"How good God is!" she often exclaimed. "He must indeed be very good to give me strength to bear all that I am enduring." One evening she sent to the Mother Prioress the following lines written in pencil with a trembling hand: "O my God! how good Thou art to the little victim of Thy Merciful Love! Even now, when Thou dost add these bodily pains to those of my soul, I cannot bring myself to say: '*The anguish of death hath encompassed me.*'[2] Rather do I cry out in my gratitude: '*I have gone down into the valley of the shadow of death, but I fear no evil, because Thou, O Lord, art with me!*'"[3]

Mother Agnes of Jesus once told her that some were under the impression that she was afraid of death. "That may easily come to pass," she replied; "I do

[1] Cf. Ps. lxxv. 10. [2] Cf. Ps. xvii. 5. [3] Cf. Ps. xxii. 4.

not rely on my own feelings, for I know my frailty. But I wish to enjoy all the peace God gives me now, it will be time enough to bear that cross, if it come. When the chaplain asked me if I were resigned to die, I told him I needed more resignation to live, and that the thought of death brought me nothing but joy. If in my last moments I suffer a great deal and show no sign of peace, let it not trouble you, dear Mother. Did not Our Lord Himself die a victim of love? Yet see how great was His agony!"

On the day before her death, September 29, at about nine o'clock in the evening, she and her youngest sister, Céline (Sister Genevieve of the Holy Face), heard a fluttering of wings in the garden, and soon after, a turtle-dove from some unknown quarter lighted on the window-sill, where it remained for a considerable time, cooing all the while. Both sisters were deeply moved as they recalled the words: "*The voice of the turtle is heard in our land. . . . Winter is now past . . . arise my love . . . my beautiful one, and come!*"[1] To Céline's request for a last word of adieu, she replied: "I have said all. . . . '*It is consummated.*'[2] . . . It is love alone that counts."

* * * * *

At last the day broke that was to be for Saint Thérèse the dawn of Eternity. On the morning of Thursday, September 30, 1897, her eyes fixed on Our Lady's statue, she thus referred to her last night on earth: "Oh! with what fervour I have prayed to her! . . . And yet it has been sheer agony, without a ray of consolation. . . . Earth's air is failing me; when shall I breathe the air of Heaven?"

At half-past two she raised herself in bed, which she had been unable to do for weeks, and exclaimed: "Mother, the chalice is full to overflowing! I could never have believed it possible to suffer so intensely . . .

[1] Cant. ii. 10, 11, 12. [2] John xix. 30.

I can explain it only by my great longing to save souls. . . . My God, whatsoever Thou wilt, but have pity on me. Sweet Virgin Mary, come to my aid." And a little while after, she added: "All that I have written of my thirst for suffering is really true. *I have no regret for having surrendered myself to Love.*" These last words she repeated several times, and a little later she continued: "Mother, prepare me to die a good death." The Mother Prioress encouraged her with the words: "My child, you are quite ready to appear before God because you have always understood the virtue of humility." Then in these striking terms the martyr of Divine Love bore witness to herself: "Yes, I feel that my soul has never sought anything but the truth . . . I have understood humility of heart!" At half-past four, as she gave signs of entering on her agony, the community was summoned. From the moment our saintly child saw the Sisters gather round her she thanked them with the sweetest smile; then, clasping the crucifix in her failing hands, she concentrated on the final combat all the powers of her soul. The sweat of death lay thick on her brow, and the "victim" trembled . . . but as a pilot, when close to harbour, is not dismayed by the fury of the storm, so this brave heart, strong in faith, saw close at hand the beacon lights of Heaven and valiantly put forth every effort to reach the shore. As the convent bell rang the evening *Angelus*, she gazed with inexpressible tenderness upon the statue of the Immaculate Virgin—Star of the Sea. It was the moment to repeat her beautiful prayer:

> "O thou who cam'st to smile on me, in the morning of my life,
> Come, Mother, once again and smile—for lo! 'tis eventide!"[1]

A few minutes after seven, turning to the Prioress, she asked: "Mother, is not this the agony? Am I not

[1] From the last poem written by St. Thérèse. [ED.]

going to die?" "Yes, my child, it is the agony, but it may be that Jesus wills it should be prolonged for some hours." "Very well, then"—she answered sweetly—"very well . . . be it so . . . Ah! I do not wish to suffer less." And looking at her crucifix she continued: "*Oh! . . . I love Him! . . . My God, I . . . love . . . Thee!*"

These were her last words. It was now a quarter past seven, and her terrible agony of body and soul had lasted for fully twelve hours. Scarcely had she spoken, when to our great surprise her whole frame drooped quite suddenly, the head inclined a little to the right, in the attitude of the Virgin Martyrs offering themselves to the sword; or rather as a Victim of Love, awaiting from the Divine Archer the fiery shaft by which she longs to die. All at once she raised herself, as though called by a mysterious voice, and opening her eyes, which shone with unutterable joy, she fixed her gaze a little above the statue of Our Lady and so remained for about the space of a *Credo*, when her blessed soul, the prey of the "Divine Eagle," was borne away to the heights of Heaven.

* * * * *

A few days before, Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face had said: "The death of love I desire is that of Jesus upon the Cross." Her wish was fully granted, for darkness and bitter anguish were the lot of her soul throughout her last agony. Yet may we not apply to her also that sublime prophecy of St. John of the Cross, referring to souls consumed by the fire of Divine Love?

"They die victims of the onslaughts of love, in raptured ecstasies—like the swan, whose song grows sweeter as death draws nigh. Wherefore the Psalmist declares: '*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints.*'[1] For then it is that the rivers of love

[1] Ps. cxv. 15.

burst forth from the soul and are lost in the ocean of Divine Love."

No sooner had the soul of the sufferer taken flight than the joy of that last rapture imprinted itself on her brow and a celestial smile illumined her face. In her hand we placed a palm-branch, the same green branch which thirteen years later was found fresh and intact in the coffin when her sacred remains were exhumed.[1] Simultaneously there began to occur in the convent certain extraordinary incidents of which the following may be mentioned as examples. The first—already alluded to—is that of a lay-sister who on kissing the feet of the Servant of God was instantly cured of cerebral anæmia. Another nun was favoured with a very strong perfume of violets; while a third felt herself thrilled by a kiss bestowed on her by some invisible being. One Sister perceived a bright light in the heavens, and another saw a luminous crown which, rising from the earth, was soon lost in space.

All through the Saturday and Sunday, people kept filing past the grating of the nuns' chapel to pay a final tribute to the "Little Flower of Jesus." Hundreds of rosaries, medals, and even trinkets, were made to touch the "little Queen" as she lay in the majestic beauty of her last sleep. Amongst the crowd was a child of ten who perceived a strong perfume of lilies, a fact which could not be naturally explained since only artificial lilies adorned the remains.

On the day of the funeral, October 4, there gathered in the chapel of our Carmel a goodly company of priests —an honour most assuredly due to one who had so

[1] The remains of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus were first exhumed on September 6, 1910, in presence of the entire Episcopal Tribunal of the Beatification. As she foretold, nothing was found of her body but the bones, yet the palm-branch mentioned above was perfectly preserved and may be seen at the Carmel. It would seem as if God wished to emphasise her words: "*Jesus! Oh, I would so love Him! Love Him as He has never yet been loved! I desire at all costs to win the palm of St. Agnes; if it cannot be mine through the shedding of blood, it must be by love.*" [ED.]

earnestly prayed for those called to that sacred office. After a last solemn blessing, the hands of Holy Mother Church cast into the furrow this grain of priceless wheat. Since then the words of the Divine Reaper have been magnificently fulfilled: "*Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*"[1]

THE CARMEL OF LISIEUX.

[1] John xii. 24, 25.

PART II

PROCESS OF CANONISATION

DURING her earthly career, Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus desired to remain forgotten and unknown. That longing amounted to a veritable passion. Equally passionate was her desire to bestow on her divine Spouse all the confidence and affection of which her childlike heart was capable. "God," says a spiritual writer, "at the dawn of eternity meets the soul that has sacrificed itself utterly throughout the night of faith, with the greeting, '*It is my turn now.*'" These words had deeply impressed our Saint in girlhood days. In her case they have been realised before the eyes both of angels and of men. "*Humility goeth before glory.*"[1] God has indeed exalted the humility of His new handmaid, investing her with regal power, and making the name of the "Little Queen" a household word in almost every part of the City of God upon earth, in the New World perhaps more than in the old. Furthermore, He has bestowed on her the gift of miracles to such a degree as to beget among the nations a lively confidence in the truth of her prophecy: "I will spend my Heaven in doing good upon earth. . . . I will let fall a shower of roses."

The fragrance of these roses was wafted far and wide as soon as her autobiography appeared in print. Favours spiritual and temporal multiplied so quickly that a wave of devotion to the Little Flower spread with amazing rapidity all over the civilised world. In the

[1] Prov. xv. 33.

1907 edition, there was added for the first time to the pages which she herself had written, a brief account of the most remarkable amongst these answers to prayer. From that date onward, they were granted in such profusion as really to merit the description of a "Shower of Roses." These favours finally determined the ecclesiastical authorities to sanction the appointment of a Postulator and a Vice-Postulator to promote the Cause of Beatification of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus. The Postulator, resident in Rome, was the Very Reverend Father Rodrigo of St. Francis of Paula, the Discalced Carmelite, who is official postulator for all Carmelite Causes. He undertook that of the Little Flower at the beginning of 1909. The Vice-Postulator, resident in Paris, was Monsignor Roger de Teil, who became, a little later, Director-General of the Society of the Holy Childhood. The editor of this volume desires to testify here to the untiring devotion shown by Mgr. de Teil in his labours for the Cause and for the Holy Childhood, in which latter undertaking the little Saint came so powerfully to his aid. In Paris and at Carfin, before his death in May, 1922, Mgr. de Teil afforded the present writer much information of which use is made in this new edition.

In March, 1910, Mgr. Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, ordered search to be made throughout his diocese for the writings of the Servant of God. In the following July he established the ecclesiastical tribunal which was to deal with her Cause. On the twelfth of August the sessions began. The proceedings were of exceptional interest, for all the facts to be investigated were of such recent occurrence that it was possible to secure an abundance of first-hand information.

Eleven of the witnesses summoned before this tribunal were nuns of the Carmel of Lisieux. Nine of these had actually lived with the Servant of God. There were twenty-six others called, sixteen of them eye-witnesses

of the events about which they were questioned. Their evidence was well supported by the documents produced in court. Of these witnesses, the present writer had the enviable privilege (owing to circumstances) of being the first to be examined after Mother Agnes of Jesus (Pauline). His deposition testified to the extraordinary devotion towards the Saint in English-speaking countries, and to the marvellous popularity of the English editions of her autobiography.

According to Mgr. de Teil, Pope Benedict XV declared that he was not surprised at France being proud of her daughter, but that the devotion of the English-speaking peoples to Sœur Thérèse proved to him clearly the finger of God was there, and he promised to bring about her speedy Beatification. Part of the official proceedings was a formal visit to the Lisieux Cemetery. The relics of the Servant of God had to be identified, and precautions taken for their safe custody. She was the first of her Carmel to be buried[1] in the plot of ground which the community had recently purchased, so that her grave was easy to locate at the right-hand corner of the enclosure. On the sixth of September, 1910, in the presence of the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, the grave was opened and its precious contents removed to a cemented vault more conveniently placed near the centre of the plot.

The night before this impressive ceremony, the Little Flower appeared to Mother Carmela, Prioress of the Carmelite Convent at Gallipoli, in Italy, who knew nothing of the proposed exhumation. "They will find only my bones," declared the Saint, and so it happened. It was her wish, she revealed to another, that her dust should be scattered to the ends of the earth to win love for her Beloved. Besides, she had said before her death: "Little souls must be able to do everything I do."

1 October 4, 1897. Divine Providence made use of the bigotry of men in order to allow of the long stream of pilgrims to her tomb. The writer first knelt there in May, 1903. [Ed.]

It would seem that God respected her preference for the common lot by not sparing her the humiliations of the tomb.

Next summer the process proving her reputation for sanctity came to an end, and another, known as the "*Non-Cult*," began, which proved that the devotion of the faithful had in no wise forestalled the decision of Holy Church. After the solemn closing session, the documents were taken to Rome by Mgr. de Teil, and in February, 1912, handed over to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

About this time, the Servant of God announced to one of her privileged friends: "I am about to let fall a torrent of roses." Henceforth the heavenly rain descended in torrents, and that other promise to a client came true: "No one will invoke me without obtaining an answer."

It has been noted as a special characteristic of the Little Flower that she still, as it were, lives and moves among men. She promised to "come down," and there is something personal about her visits to earth. When she appears, she speaks and behaves as in life, and thus continues her autobiography from Paradise. She is as easy of access in Heaven as she used to be in the days of her earthly pilgrimage. She who greeted with a smile every request for help, now accompanies her answer to our prayers with the significant scent of the rose. In life she proved her love for her Spouse by never letting slip the chance of any little act of virtue, and to-day she shows herself eager to win our confidence by helping us in our most trifling needs.

Another marked characteristic is the familiar footing on which she stands with those who love her. She lives with them on terms of closest intimacy, assisting them in the smallest details of the daily round, a sure guide and a compassionate friend. Thus the strewer of roses spends her eternity, supremely happy in Heaven with her divine Spouse, and supremely busy on His behalf

upon earth. A selection from the countless records of her favours already fills seven volumes, and the harvest is by no means completely garnered. We may apply to this new autobiography what St. Thérèse said of the old: "Many of its pages will be read only in Heaven." But those we are privileged to read reveal to us a heart burning with compassion for every phase of human misery, physical or moral, and wonderful in its sympathy with the lowly and the poor.

Especially does she delight in playing the part of ministering angel towards the Lord's anointed. Benedict XV knew this well. "Pray to her," he advised a priest; "it is her special vocation to teach priests how to love Jesus Christ." Many a heart holds its own secret record of the wonderful way in which she fulfils this part of her mission.

While winning souls to "love Him who is Love itself," the Little Flower continues to make herself beloved. Our Lord revealed to her on her deathbed the queenly power she would exercise over hearts. Those standing round her at that solemn moment heard her exclaim: "Ah! I know well that everyone will love me!"[1] The words have proved prophetic. From all parts of the civilised world petitions poured in on the Vatican urging the speedy Beatification of the Little Flower of Jesus. England and Canada were conspicuous in this crusade, both by the number of signatures and by the number of influential names appended to the petitions. During the late European war, soldiers of every rank joined in the appeal, and petitions reached the Holy Father from the battle front on behalf of the Cause of the "Little Sister of the trenches." Again, so popular was she in Brazil, that the nation presented her Carmel with a rich casket, studded with precious stones, as a processional shrine for her sacred relics.

Moved by all this enthusiasm, Cardinal Vico, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, remarked several

1 "Ah! Je le sais bien; tout le monde m'aimera!"

years ago: "We must hasten to glorify the little Saint, otherwise we shall be forestalled by the voice of the people." And when His Eminence came to France for the consecration of the Basilica at Montmartre, he said in the Carmel of Lisieux: "Were we living in the early centuries of the Church, when the Servants of God were beatified by acclamation, Sœur Thérèse would long ago have ranked among the Blessed."

Another very striking sign of this world-wide confidence in her intercession was the steadily increasing stream of pilgrims who came to kneel before the simple cross, under the shadow of which lay all that was mortal of the Servant of God. It is computed that on an average eighty thousand pilgrims prayed before her tomb each year. It was touching to watch the throng, some of them barefoot, as they climbed the steep hill, rosary in hand, or singing their hymns, in order to pour out their hearts on the hallowed spot. Not infrequently a pilgrim would remark: "It is like praying at Lourdes."

On June 10, 1914, to resume our narrative, Pius X, having received a favourable report from the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, signed the decree authorising the introduction of the Cause before the Roman Court. Henceforward the Cause was directly under the Holy See. Soon Remissorial Letters were issued to the Bishop of Bayeux, authorising him to establish a tribunal in his diocese for the Apostolic Process. This new and devoted tribunal, like its predecessor, was composed of the most distinguished priests of the diocese.

On August 10, 1917, there was a second opening of the grave, as required by Canon Law. The ceremony was intended to be private, but the faithful flocked in their thousands, and their devout reverence enhanced considerably the solemnity of the scene. The bones were identified by two medical experts, then laid in a chest of carved oak which was itself enclosed in one of rosewood lined with lead. On October 30, the ninety-

first session of the Apostolic Process was held in the Cathedral of Bayeux. Its records filled 2,500 pages, two thousand of which dealt with the evidence on the question of whether or not the Servant of God had practised virtue in an heroic degree. Mgr. de Teil, the Vice-Postulator, was appointed to deliver the records personally to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. This he duly accomplished, and on December 10, 1918, the validity of the documents was officially recognised. Shortly afterwards, Pope Benedict XV, in view of the world-wide enthusiasm for the Little Flower, was graciously pleased to exempt her Cause from the fifty years' delay imposed by Canon Law between the death of a Servant of God and the examination of the Process.

The case could now be discussed in all its bearings, and the result of the examination was laid before the Consultors at what is known as the "Antepreparatory Congregation," held on June 1, 1920. The favourable report of this committee was ratified by the Cardinals at the "Preparatory Congregation" held on January 25, 1921; and again by both committees at a "General Congregation" on August 10, at which His Holiness assisted. After a brief delay for prayer and deliberation, Pope Benedict XV fixed on Sunday, August 14, 1921, for the reading of the decree concerning the heroic virtue of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

The decree was solemnly promulgated in the Consistorial Hall at the Vatican before a numerous and sympathetic audience. The Sovereign Pontiff on this occasion pronounced a panegyric on the Little Flower, and on the "Way of Spiritual Childhood" which it was her mission to recall to men. The discourse, given elsewhere in these pages, produced a deep impression, and proved to be the *Nunc dimittis* of the august and devoted client.

There still remained the searching examination of the miracles attributed to her intercession. Out of the six

cures, the records of which were submitted to Rome, two were selected for special scrutiny by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Only two miracles are required in a Cause where so many of the witnesses had actually known the Servant of God. The first of these miracles was wrought, as far back as the year 1906, in favour of Charles Anne, a native of Lisieux aged twenty-three. He was studying for the priesthood at the diocesan seminary of Bayeux, but was attacked in the lungs by tuberculosis and brought to death's door. His friends began a novena to Our Lady of Lourdes, through the intercession of Sœur Thérèse. This was without success, however, so the invalid began another novena, this time to the holy Carmelite alone, in order that the saving of his priestly vocation might be manifestly due to her intercession. Charles had always shown himself the intrepid champion of the Little Flower among the seminarists, and now he turned to her with unshaken trust in her promise: "I will spend my Heaven in doing good upon earth." After a dreadful hæmorrhage, which betokened the approach of the end, he cried out to his patroness: "I did not come here to die! I came to work for God! You *must* cure me!" Then he fell asleep, clutching a relic of the saint which just then came mysteriously into his hands. When he awoke, he was perfectly cured. It is interesting to note that the superior of the seminary at that time was Father Duboscq, S.S., formerly Professor at the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, and later the holder of the distinguished office of the Promoter of the Faith in the process of the Little Flower's Canonisation. Father Anne, with the aged religious who had nursed him, assisted at the Beatification ceremony in St. Peter's, April 29, 1923. During his pilgrimage to Rome, he communicated to the writer of these lines the story of the miracle.

The second cure selected was that of a nun, one of the Daughters of the Cross at Ustarritz in the south of France. Sister Louise of St. Germain had been ailing

since her noviciate (1911-12), and, early in 1913, it was discovered that a terrible ulcer had formed in her stomach. In 1915 she was believed to be at the point of death, and the Last Sacraments were administered. A novena to Sœur Thérèse strengthened her to bear the heavy cross, and, from time to time, a celestial fragrance came to cheer the invalid and remind her of the mysterious presence of the Little Flower. In September, 1916, the patient sufferer began another novena. During the night of September 10, Saint Thérèse appeared to her and said: "Be generous with God. I promise you, you will soon be cured." Next morning the floor around the bed was found thickly strewn with rose petals of various colours. How did they get there? No one could explain. Sister Louise grew worse, but was occasionally comforted by the same heavenly perfume as before. Then, after a fearful crisis, she slept peacefully all night, and woke on the morning of September 25 completely cured, and quite able to join her community that same day. It was a veritable resurrection. The certificate given by her medical attendant was confirmed by an X-ray photograph and by Dr. le Bec of Paris, the famous surgeon, who wrote a remarkable paper to prove the supernatural character of the cure.

Both miracles were thoroughly discussed by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and the verdict was recorded in the three customary congregations: the *Ante-preparatory* on March 7, when the votes of the Consultors were taken; the *Preparatory* on July 25, when the Cardinals and the Consultors renewed the examination; and the *Plenary* or General Congregation on January 30, 1923, when Consultors and Cardinals again discussed the miracles in presence of the Sovereign Pontiff himself. Pius XI, who had succeeded Benedict XV on the Papal Throne, had also inherited his wonderful devotion to the great daughter of Saint Teresa. In view of the favourable verdict, our Holy Father promulgated on February 11 the decree approving the miracles, and, on

March 19, the decree known as the *De tuto*, formally authorising the Beatification.

On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, the relics were removed from the cemetery to the Carmel at Lisieux. More than two hundred priests were present, at their head Mgr. Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux, and the Very Reverend Father Rodrigo of St. Francis of Paula, O.D.C., Postulator of the Cause and official delegate from the Holy See. When the vault was opened, a delicious fragrance of roses filled the air—fitting symbol of the heavenly petals which the Little Flower was about to shower down. By priestly hands the rosewood casket was lifted on to a magnificent car, and fifty thousand pilgrims escorted with all reverence the virginal remains to the Carmel whence the soul of the Saint had taken its flight to Paradise. Next day in the Convent chapel, Mgr. Lemonier again presided at a session of the ecclesiastical tribunal. After formal identification, one portion of the precious relics was deposited in the magnificent Brazilian reliquary; the other in a casket of rosewood. The first was placed in the beautiful marble shrine, underneath the *Corpo Santo*, or recumbent image of the Saint; the second within the *Corpo Santo* itself.

On April 29, 1923, the Venerable Thérèse of the Child Jesus was enrolled among the Blessed, to the great joy of the whole Catholic world. It was the first Beatification by Pius XI. The attendant crowds, recruited from all parts of the globe, resembled those to be seen at a great Canonisation. No one who took part in the ceremony could forget the enthusiasm of the multitude, or the great *Te Deum*, reserved solely for a Canonisation, and intoned on this occasion by a happy mistake.

The Beatification was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm throughout the Church. In parish, convent, and lonely mission, everywhere the joyous event was celebrated; and always the roses she loved festooned

her altars. Marvellous was the harvest of grace that was reaped in the September of 1923. At the Lisieux Carmel the feast was held with unrivalled pomp. Cardinals came thither from Rome, from England, from America. The town was gaily decorated on the day when her relics were borne along its streets. The flags of many nations—every one an *ex-voto*—floated overhead. Officers and soldiers whom she had assisted in the war formed a guard of honour around the precious remains. Thirty prelates and eight hundred priests formed the escort of the "Little Queen," while between sixty and eighty thousand pilgrims lined the route.

That year—1923—about three hundred thousand pilgrims visited Lisieux. The number increased in the following years, for now dioceses and parishes sent their organised pilgrimages. In addition, there was always a steady stream of individual pilgrims. All of these came, either seeking "roses," or returning thanks.

There was no difficulty in finding the two miracles required by Holy Church before the infallible voice of the Vicar of Christ could proclaim the Blessed Thérèse a canonised Saint. On the very day of the Beatification, thirty remarkable favours were recorded. Two cures were soon selected for examination by the Congregation of Rites.[1]

A young Belgian girl, Mlle. Marie Pellemans, came in a dying state to Lisieux a few days before the translation of the relics. Next day, March 24, at the grave of the Little Flower, she was suddenly and completely restored to health. The case was one of tuberculosis both in the lungs and in the intestines, and the disease had for many years played havoc with her frame. The second cure was that of Sister Gabriel Trimusi, a religious of the Congregation known as the Chieppine, and living at Parma, Italy. She was suffering from arthritis in the

[1] A full account of these two miracles will be found in the Bull of Canonisation, p. 278. [ED.]

knee, and from tuberculosis of the spine. She had recourse to Blessed Thérèse during the triduum of thanksgiving which was celebrated at the Convent in Parma after the Beatification, June, 1923. At the close of the exercises she felt an irresistible impulse to discard all artificial support, and found she could stand upright. All her infirmities had entirely disappeared.

The Sacred Congregation of Rites subjected both these miracles to the usual searching scrutiny. The three customary congregations were held, the Antepreparatory, August 12, 1924; the Preparatory, January 27, 1925; the General on March 17. On March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, there was issued the Papal Decree approving the miracles, and this was followed on March 29 by the decree *De tuto*.

Finally on May 17 in the holy year of Jubilee, our Holy Father, Pius XI set a new star in the firmament of the Church, and crowned France with new glory by the Canonisation of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus.[1] Not since St. Teresa herself, had a daughter of Carmel attained this pinnacle of glory.

Who is this, one might ask, to whom the Church applies the words spoken to Judith:[2] "*Blessed be the Lord, because He hath so magnified thy name this day, that it shall never depart from the mouth of men*"?[3] The Little Flower of Jesus would answer, as she did in life:

"I AM ONLY A VERY LITTLE SOUL UPON WHOM GOD HAS SHOWERED HIS GRACES FOR HERSELF AND FOR VERY MANY OTHERS."

She might also reply in the words of the Baptist: "*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.*" That straight path, her *little way*, is it not the one described by Isaias: "*There shall*

[1] A full account of the ceremony has already been given in the Prologue to this volume.

[2] Anthem in Vespers of St. Thérèse. [3] Judith xiii. 25.

be a way called a holy way, that will be for you a straight way; the simple of heart shall walk therein and shall not stray"?

This narrative cannot be brought to a close better than by quoting the prayer based on her words to her missionary brother: "O God, who hast inflamed with Thy love the soul of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, grant that we also may love Thee and make Thee much loved." *Trahe nos, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum!*—Draw us, we shall run in the odour of thy perfumes, along thy *sure way*, to the Christ of Bethlehem and Nazareth, of Calvary and the Altar.

T. N. T.

PART III

THE PAPAL DOCUMENTS

Allocution by His Holiness Pope Benedict XV

On the occasion of the Promulgation of the Decree concerning the virtues of the Venerable Thérèse of the Child Jesus

LESS than a month ago, in proclaiming in this very hall the heroic character of the virtues of the Venerable Pierre Fournet, We remarked that France seemed desirous of adding to her titles the new and enviable one of "Mother of Saints."

The echo of our words has scarcely died away, and already We are called upon to proclaim the beauty of another flower, which also flourished on French soil, and we are forced to recognise as heroic the virtues of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a professed Religious of the Carmel of Lisieux.

Even those but slightly acquainted with the life of "little Thérèse" will unite their voices to those of the great chorus which acclaims this life as the type of all the virtues of *spiritual childhood.*

THERE LIES THE SECRET OF SANCTITY,

not only for the people of France, but for all the Faithful scattered over the whole world. We have, therefore, every reason to hope that the example of the new French heroine will be the means of swelling the ranks of perfect Christians not only in her own country, but wherever the children of the Catholic Church are to be found.

That this result may be achieved, it is necessary

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The Tomb of St Thérèse

to understand clearly all that is implied by the term "spiritual childhood." It seems fitting that the Decree, which to-day exalts one whose heroic perfection was the fruit of those very virtues which are the outcome of spiritual childhood, should propose to itself as its object the significance of all that the term "spiritual childhood" is intended to convey. Thus, all will appreciate the excellent reason why our joy is not limited to that shared with France. Thus, also, all will be better able to realise that there is a call to the Faithful of every nation, no matter what may be their age, sex, or state of life,

TO ENTER WHOLEHEARTEDLY INTO THE LITTLE WAY

which led Sœur Thérèse to the summit of heroic virtue.

The harmony which exists between body and mind renders it possible for the former to furnish a basis for the explanation of the characteristics of spiritual childhood. Observe a child as yet uncertain of its steps, and without the use of speech. If pursued by another child of its own age, or threatened by a stronger child, or terrified by the unexpected sight of some animal, whither does it run for safety? Where does it seek a refuge? On its mother's breast. Shielded in her arms, and clasped to her bosom, all its fears vanish, and with a deep sigh it faces, not only fearlessly but even daringly, the object of its former terror and distress, as though it would say: "Now I am sure of help. I fling myself with confidence into my mother's arms, not only to be safeguarded from all enemy attacks, but to be there, where I can gather strength." In the same way spiritual childhood is the result of trust in God and complete abandonment to Him.

It will not be out of place to enumerate the qualities of this spiritual childhood, both as regards what it omits and what it includes. It knows nothing of self-pride, or the thought of being able to attain by purely natural

means a supernatural end, or those spurious notions of self-reliance in the hour of danger and temptation. On the other hand, it presupposes a lively faith in the existence of God, a practical homage to His power and mercy, a confident recourse to the providence of Him who alone can give us grace to avoid evil and seek good. Thus, whether regarded from the negative or the positive point of view, the

QUALITIES WHICH COMPRISE SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD

evoke our admiration, and enable us to realise why Our Lord Jesus Christ pointed to it as a necessary condition for obtaining eternal life.

One day Our Lord beckoned from the crowd a little child and, showing him to His disciples, said: "*Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*"[1] How eloquent a lesson against the error and ambition of those who look upon the kingdom of Heaven as an earthly empire, in which they may seek the first places, or soar to the highest dignities! "*Who, think you,*" said the Master, "*is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?*" Then, in order to impress more deeply upon their minds the fact that pre-eminence in the kingdom of Heaven will be the prerogative of those who are children in spirit, He continued: "*Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he will be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.*"[2] On another occasion some mothers brought to Him their little ones that He might lay His hands on them, and upon their being repulsed by His disciples, Jesus exclaimed indignantly: "*Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.*" And He repeated: "*Amen, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it.*"[3]

It is of great importance to note the force of the

[1] Matt. xviii. 3. [2] Matt. xviii. 4. [3] Mark x. 14, 15.

language used by Our Divine Lord. The Son of God was not content with merely stating that the kingdom of Heaven was for children—"*For of such is the kingdom of Heaven*"—or that whosoever should become as a little child would be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. He went so far as to exclude from His kingdom those who did not become as little children. Now, when a master adopts various methods to inculcate the same lesson, does he not thereby seek to emphasise its value in his sight? If Jesus Christ used so many devices to drive home this lesson to His disciples, it is because He wishes, by one means or another, to ensure their thorough understanding of it. From this we must conclude it was the Divine Master's express desire, that His disciples should see that

THE WAY OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD IS THE PATH WHICH LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE.

In face of this insistent and forcible teaching of Our Lord, there would surely not be a soul that could hesitate to enter this way of confidence and self-surrender—all the more so, to repeat our own words, because Our Divine Lord, not only in a general manner, but also by a concrete example, declared this way of life to be absolutely essential, even in the case of those who have lost the innocence of their childhood. There are some who try to persuade themselves that the way of trust and abandonment to God is the exclusive privilege of those souls whose baptismal robe has remained unsullied by sin. They are unable to reconcile the idea of spiritual childhood with the loss of their innocence. But do not the words of the Divine Master, "*Unless ye be converted and become as little children*," indicate the necessity of a change, and, consequently, the effort to effect that change? "*Unless ye be converted*" suggests a transformation which the disciples of Jesus had to undergo in order to become children once again; and who should become a child

again, if not he who is no longer one? "*Unless ye become as little children*" indicates the need for exertion, for it is obvious that a man must work to become that which he has never been, or which he has ceased to be. Since it is impossible for a man never to have been a child, the words "*Unless you become as children*"—carry with them

THE OBLIGATION TO LABOUR TO REGAIN THE LOST QUALITIES OF CHILDHOOD.

It would be absurd to dream of resuming either the outward appearance or feebleness of the state of infancy, but it is not unreasonable to discern, in the words of the Gospel, a counsel given to those who have attained maturity to return to the virtues associated with spiritual childhood.

In the course of centuries, fresh force was given to this teaching by the example of those who attained the perfection of Christian heroism through practising these very virtues. Mother Church has ever been ready to bring these examples before the eyes of her children, in order that they may be better known, and the command of the Divine Master more universally obeyed. To-day, again, she has but the same end in view when she proclaims the heroic degree of the virtues of Sœur Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Although it did not fall to the lot of this Venerable Servant of God to spend long years in His service, or to undertake for Him enterprises of great moment, yet in less than twenty-five years she became rich in merits. One of a Religious Order in which even the glory of the Doctorate adorns the weaker sex, she was not set apart to pursue any learned studies; nevertheless,

SO RICH WAS SHE IN THE SCIENCE OF THE SAINTS

that she was able to point out to others the true path to salvation. But where did she reap this copious harvest?

Where did she gather such an abundance of ripe fruit? In the garden of spiritual childhood. Whence was derived this vast treasure of knowledge? From the secrets which God reveals to little ones.

The daughter of Louis Stanislaus Martin was born at Alençon, on January 2, 1873. Though she may have shown at first the thoughtlessness and merry vivacity common to very young children, yet trustworthy witnesses affirm that the loss she suffered, when four years of age, in the death of her mother, produced in her a seriousness and maturity of mind far in advance of her years. Might it not have been the will of Almighty God to effect in her this sudden transformation, this early determination to adorn her soul with the qualities of spiritual childhood, in order that she might in her own person serve as an illustration of the Divine precept: "*Unless ye be converted . . . unless ye become as children . . .*"?

Certain it is that, from this time, Thérèse, both in her words and deeds, furnished proof of an extraordinary maturity of judgement. Worthy of special admiration, moreover, is the readiness with which she ascribed to God all beauty visible in His creatures; and the manner in which she looked to Him alone for help to overcome all the defects she deplored both in her own soul and in that of her neighbour. With what spontaneity did she throw herself into the arms of Almighty God, above all in the hour of suffering and distress! How vividly she brings before our minds the eagerness of a child hastening to the shelter of its mother's arms when it feels its own weakness! Thérèse's recourse to prayer was so frequent, her abandonment to God so thorough, that she was able to identify her life on earth with that of the Blessed in Heaven.

She loved her parents with a most pure love; but she would have feared to pray that their lives might be prolonged, lest she might delay their enjoyment of

the happiness of the next world—to her immeasurably above any that this world had to offer.

From all this it would be easy to conclude that with each passing year the virtues of spiritual childhood should take deeper root in the soul of little Thérèse. But the reality far surpassed all expectation, as is clearly proved by her conduct at the most critical period of her life. Her father, a true model of Christian parents, had resigned himself to the loss of the loving ministrations of his youngest daughter, and had even shown

THE NOBLE PRIDE HE FELT THAT ALL HIS FAMILY SHOULD BE CONSECRATED TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.

But his excellent brother-in-law thought otherwise. Moreover, the Bishop of the diocese, and the ecclesiastical Superior of the Carmel of Lisieux, were not at all disposed to allow her to fulfil the vow made in her childhood of burying herself in Carmel at fifteen years of age. In vain, however, did they look for any complaint from the lips of Thérèse, either against her uncle, who declared that he would not sanction her entry into Carmel till she had reached the age of seventeen; or against the opposition of the Superior, who postponed it till she should have attained her twenty-first year. Oh! how the little dove must have mourned in its impatience to hide itself in the sacred retreat of Carmel! But God alone heard her sighs. Fearing, indeed, that this opposition might even be from Him, she did not venture to gainsay her parents and superiors, who interpreted this silence as a sign of her acquiescence—a marked proof of her confident trust in God.

There was no change in the attitude of Thérèse, even after the failure of her direct and courageous appeal to the Pope. What a useless journey it seemed! What disapproval and, probably, even humiliations were hers! Would all these trials have the effect of shaking her resolution, and of making her place the advice of man before what she believed to be the will of God? But

heroic virtue supposes constancy and perseverance. The more she had to endure from the opposition of man, the more she multiplied her acts of confidence in God, and her protestations of abandonment to Him, thus preparing herself to climb to the summit of Christian perfection by the exercise of those virtues characteristic of spiritual childhood. God did not spare her trials, and she embraced them as the means of detaching herself more and more from the affection of creatures, and of uniting herself more closely to the Spouse of her soul.

When at last the Bishop of the Diocese yielded to her repeated entreaties, the fulfilment of her vow was still deferred by the Mother Prioress, who delayed her entry into Carmel for four months. Thérèse could have acted upon the advice given her by Pope Leo XIII, who told her to "do whatever her Superior should enjoin in the matter," for among her superiors she placed foremost her Bishop. However, this assiduity in seeking to gain her object, though quite lawful in itself, might nevertheless have given rise to the belief that Thérèse relied upon human means; her confidence in God might have seemed diminished, her abandonment less complete. She preferred to remain silent under this new disappointment, and continued to maintain her peace of mind in the firm belief that God rewards in His own time those who trust in Him.

On April 9, 1888, Thérèse received her reward. Through the designs of Providence she was placed

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE CHILD JESUS,

who thus showed His pleasure at her faithful endeavour to honour the virtues of His infancy. Let us add, moreover, that this new title served as a fresh incentive to the holy Carmelite to abandon herself more entirely to God. She pictured to herself the ever-docile Child of Bethlehem in the arms of His most holy Mother, ready to let Himself be borne from Bethlehem to

Egypt, and from Egypt to Nazareth. Thérèse, in her turn, placed herself in the arms of the holy rule of Carmel, allowing herself to be guided in everything by religious obedience. With the eyes of her soul, she saw the Divine Worker of Nazareth always fulfilling tasks allotted to Him by His adopted father, always submissive to those who stood to Him in the place of His Heavenly Father. In imitation of His example, Thérèse diligently carried out the orders of her Prioress and Novice Mistress, and this she did perfectly, without complaint or remark of any nature, as though possessing no will of her own. So brightly did there shine in this young Carmelite the virtues of the Infant Saviour that, if by a dispensation of Providence the title, "of the Child Jesus," had not fallen to her lot, her Sisters in religion would have bestowed it upon her. When one day the Infant Saviour appeared to her holy Mother of Avila, and on asking her name received from the saintly Reformer the reply, "I am called Teresa of Jesus," she merited to hear this answer: "And I am Jesus of Teresa." In like manner Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux could declare:

"I AM CALLED THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS BECAUSE THE CHILD JESUS IS THE MASTER AND MODEL OF THÉRÈSE."

The general esteem in which she was held by the Community caused her to be chosen to help the Novice Mistress. In spite of the different characters with which she was thus brought in contact there was never the slightest alteration in the sweet tranquillity of her manner, nor did the multiplicity of the demands made upon her ever bring to her lips one word of impatience. In all her doubts she had recourse to the Child Jesus. From that same Child who, in the workshop of Nazareth, "increased in wisdom and in age,"[1] she never failed to receive the solution of her difficulties, and thus she

[1] Luke ii. 52.

persevered faithfully in what she styled her "little way," during the nine and a half years of her religious life.

We will not pain you, dearly beloved Sons, by explaining to you that her sanctity was in no way overshadowed by the predictions made upon her deathbed, or by her advice to spread everywhere "*The Story of a Soul*,"[1] that faithful picture of the interior life of "little Thérèse." Most humble throughout her lifetime, she could not, at that supreme moment, give expression to any sentiment, apparently contrary to humility, unless acting directly under divine inspiration. Man's intelligence is too limited to understand the motives of the Almighty when He inspires the utterances of any of His creatures. One could, however, without temerity, read into such instances the timely purpose of extending beyond its usual confines the efficacy of good example. Moreover, in the case of Sœur Thérèse, it is right to recognise a special design of God to exalt the merits of the doctrine of spiritual childhood. In the Holy Scriptures we read that by the mouths of children glory is often given to God: "*By the mouths of babes and sucklings, Thou hast perfected praise.*" In some cases there is even added the power of circumventing the wiles of the enemy: "*That Thou mayest destroy the enemy and the avenger.*"[2] How, then, can we help but believe that Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, by the exercise of the virtues characteristic of spiritual childhood, has been destined by God to take her place among those who render to God this perfect homage? A glance at the times in which she lived almost enables us to assert also that it was indeed her mission—"*that the enemy and avenger might be destroyed.*" But,

WITHOUT THE WORLD-WIDE CIRCULATION OF "THE STORY OF A SOUL"

it would not have been possible for this mission to have been fulfilled.

[1] Title of the French edition of her autobiography. [2] Ps. viii. 3.

And now, far from bringing forward any objection, easily refutable, against the sanctity of Thérèse of the Child Jesus, let us recognise the fact that this sanctity was the result of heroic virtues, attained by persevering and practical love for the grace of spiritual childhood.

To the theoretical recognition of this truth should be added the firm resolution to imitate the new heroine. Duplicity and crafty stratagem are only too characteristic of the day. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that piety towards God, and charity towards one's neighbour, should so have waned. May all this soon be changed! To the deceits, the fraud, the hypocrisy of the world, may there be opposed the sincerity of a child. With this sincerity, under the guidance of the Carmelite of Lisieux, may there be also cultivated the habit of always walking in the presence of God, and the resolution to let oneself be guided by the hands of His Divine Providence.

Sœur Thérèse, shortly before her death, promised to "*spend her Heaven in doing good upon earth.*" We know that she has kept her word, for the favours obtained through her intercession are innumerable. We ourselves, particularly during the dark days of the recent war, were the recipient of numerous letters from French soldiers and officers, who attributed to Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus their preservation from imminent danger of death. These letters were the more sincere inasmuch as they frequently told of a change of life, a pledge of gratitude towards their heavenly benefactress. But it is surely inconceivable that the charity of Thérèse will not still continue to lavish favours on those who have at heart the desire to imitate her as closely as possible.

IT IS OUR SPECIAL DESIRE THAT THE SECRET OF HER SANCTITY MAY BE DISCLOSED TO ALL OUR CHILDREN.

And, in order that it may produce in one and all the

same admirable results as in Thérèse, We invoke the blessing of God not only on all here present, but on every member of the Christian Family.

May the first fruits of this blessing fall upon Catholic France, proud as she well may be to-day of the new heroine to whom she gave birth!

May a special blessing also rest upon the fortunate diocese of Bayeux and Lisieux, as, by means of the name of Thérèse, it sees its fame spread abroad throughout the world! We ask her to obtain that there may be spared to it for many a year the worthy Bishop, who incites his clergy to holiness, and has the joy of seeing Christian virtue flourish among the laity.

But where should the Roses promised by Thérèse fall more abundantly than on the privileged Carmel in which she realised the most burning desires of her heart? May Heaven's richest blessings be showered upon it, in order that it may ever be a fair garden whence choicest flowers of sanctity will spring.

Finally, may the consolations of the divine blessing never be wanting to those who, in Rome and elsewhere, are instrumental in promoting the Cause of the Beatification of the Carmelite of Lisieux!

THE MORE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS NEW HEROINE IS SPREAD ABROAD,

the greater will be the number of her imitators giving glory to God by the practice of the virtues of spiritual childhood.

Allocution of Pius XI.

February 11, 1923, *on the occasion of the approval of the Miracles attributed to the Venerable Thérèse of the Child Jesus*

The voice of God and the voice of His people have joined in extolling the Venerable Thérèse of the Child Jesus. The voice of God first made itself heard, and

the faithful, recognising the divine call, added their voices to the anthem of praise. We repeat, the voice of God was the first to speak, as is clear from the magnificent preparation of that soul whose splendour dazzles us to-day. It is God Himself whom we exalt when we laud the heroic virtue of this heavenly work of His hands. Scarcely, however, had the divine voice gone forth than there arose the voice of the people of God, urgent, insistent, and a great multitude of pilgrims flocked to the tomb of Sœur Thérèse.

Soon the eloquence of the people was strengthened by the eloquence of the miracles, and in the concert of harmony God spoke with great majesty: *Vox Domini in magnificentiâ.* God it is who has trained this soul to scale with the agility of a fawn the sublime heights of perfection: *Vox Domini praeparantis cervos.* God it is who by His astounding miracles has revealed

WHAT A TREASURE-HOUSE OF GRACE HE HAD HIDDEN AWAY IN THE HEART OF THÉRÈSE:

Vox Domini revelabit condensa. For the virtues of that heroic soul constitute in themselves a miracle: *A Domino factum est istud et est mirabile in oculis nostris.* The perusal of even the abridged narrative of the life of "little Thérèse" inspires one to apply to her the words of the immortal Dante: "She has come down from Heaven to earth that we may know what a miracle means."[1]

Now this miracle abounds in lessons that tend to the divine glory and to our advantage. The inexhaustible wealth of God's power, the infinite resources of the heavenly Artist, are made as plain to us in the supernatural realm as they are in the world of nature. It might even be said that a knowledge of Nature will serve as an introduction to what is of far greater value, an understanding of things supernatural. For the same

[1] Cosa venuta di cielo in terra a miracolo mostrare.

Deity who launches into space the stupendous cosmic system, moving in ordered harmony, also carves out in the secret heart of the rock the facets of the crystal, which with its delicate symmetry speaks no less eloquently of His perfect wisdom. The same Hand that brings into being the mammoth, and the monsters of the deep, fashions also those tiny organisms too minute to be visible to the human eye.

It is not otherwise in the spiritual world. Confining ourselves to the Saints whose centenary the Church has lately kept, we find that God has created such giants of zeal and holiness as Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier. Behind these, on the far horizon, we catch a glimpse of Peter and Paul, of Athanasius, Chrysostom and Ambrose. But lo! the same heavenly Artist has secretly fashioned, with a love wellnigh infinite,

A MOST EXQUISITE MINIATURE OF SPIRITUAL PERFECTION,

this maiden so modest, so humble—this *child*. We have here, on the spiritual plane, the same variety which God has established in the material world. In the words of Manzoni, the Christian poet whose fiftieth anniversary we are about to celebrate: "God raises in our fields the wheat wherewith we are fed, the flax wherewith we are clothed, and the medicinal herbs which heal. He, too, made the pine that withstands the tempest, and the pliant willow, the fir which defies the wintry blast and the poplar that rears itself proudly when the waters flood the land. But He also created the fragile blossom, the dainty petals of which reserve their loveliness for Him alone, while its delicate perfume mounts heavenward as an incense, until in silence it fades away." Is not this shy flower, this radiant and scented bloom, this beauty disclosed only to the divine eyes—is not this the "little Thérèse of the Child Jesus"?

What is the lesson which God would convey to us here? What does "little Thérèse" wish to say, she

who likewise has become a "word of God"—*verbum Dei?* For God speaks through His works, and it is the privilege of those who are in close communion with Him to speak also to us, not in words alone, but in works. God tells us, then, and "little Thérèse" with Him, that there is one thing in the sight of Heaven as great as, if not greater than the gift of outstanding genius; as priceless as the high qualities of wisdom and organising power which have rendered so fruitful the spiritual genius of a Francis de Sales, or a Teresa of Avila—to name again the Saints whose centenary we have been recently keeping. That one thing so precious to God is none other than humility: sincere humility of heart, utter fidelity to duty wheresoever God has placed us, readiness for self-sacrifice, affectionate surrender to God's loving guidance, charity above all, the charity that is genuine love of God and a tender affection for the Jesus who has loved us so tenderly, a charity which—as St. Paul to-day reminds us—"is patient, is kind . . . beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

SUCH IS THE "LITTLE WAY,"

and if it cannot lead each one of us to the lofty heights reached by Thérèse, it is nevertheless not merely a possible, but an easy way for every soul. It is not given to all, says St. Augustine, to preach and to perform great works, but who is there that is incapable of prayer, of humility, and of love?

Such, then, is the lesson which "little Thérèse" teaches us to-day, in order that we may aspire after the perfection of the Christian life. In the radiant light of her words and her works we congratulate the whole Order of Carmel on the new flower which the charity of the Heart of Christ has caused to blossom in its garden. We congratulate Cardinal Vico and all those who have had any share in bringing so glorious an enterprise to such a happy conclusion.

To-day closes the first year of our Pontificate and is the anniversary of Mary's first apparition to Bernadette. We give thanks to God for this auspicious patronage of our Immaculate Mother, and for the promises that have come to us from *our beloved guiding-star*, Thérèse of the Child Jesus,

MIRACLE OF VIRTUES AND PRODIGY OF MIRACLES.

We commend to her intercession, not only our own poor, humble self, not only the Carmelite missionaries and all the missionary work so dear to her heart—the work that inspired her high hopes and burning words—but We commend to her the Universal Church, the whole of the vast family which the Heart of God has entrusted to the care of our own heart, and from that heart of ours We bless each one of you, each mind, each heart, that wheresoever your thoughts and affections may travel, there also our benediction may find its way.

Sermon of Pius XI

Preached after the Gospel at the Canonisation of St. Thérèse, May 17, 1925

Blessed be God and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of meries, and God of all consolation; who in the midst of the countless cares of our apostolic ministry, has granted Us the joy of inscribing as our first Saint in the calendar the Virgin who was also the first to be beatified by Us, at the beginning of our Pontificate. This maiden became a child in the order of grace, but her spirit of childhood was united to such greatness of soul that, in accordance with the promises of Christ,

SHE MERITED TO BE GLORIFIED BEFORE THE CHURCH UPON EARTH,

as well as in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

We give thanks to God likewise for permitting Us, who hold the place of His Only Son, to repeat insistently to-day from this chair of Truth and during this solemn ceremony the salutary teaching of the Divine Master. When the disciples asked: "Who will be the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?" calling a child and setting him in their midst, He pronounced these memorable words: "Amen, I say to you, unless ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."[1]

The new St. Thérèse had learned thoroughly this teaching of the Gospels and had translated it into her daily life. Moreover she taught the way of *spiritual childhood* by word and example to the novices of her monastery. She set it forth clearly in all her writings, which have gone to the ends of the world, and which assuredly no one has read without being charmed thereby, or without reading them again and again with great pleasure and much profit. For this simple child, this flower that blossomed in the walled garden of Carmel, not content with adding to Thérèse the name of the "Child Jesus," retraced in herself His living image, so that it may be said that

WHOSOEVER HONOURS THÉRÈSE
HONOURS THE DIVINE MODEL SHE REPRODUCED.

Therefore We nurse the hope to-day of seeing springing up in the souls of the faithful of Christ a burning desire of leading a life of *spiritual childhood*. That spirit consists in thinking and acting, under the influence of virtue, as a child feels and acts in the natural order. Little children are not blinded by sin, or disturbed by the passions, and they enjoy in peace the possession of their innocence. Guiltless of malice or pretence, they speak and act as they think, so that they show themselves as they really are. Thus Thérèse

[1] Matt. xviii. 2.

appeared more angelic than human in her practice of truth and justice, endowed as she was with the simplicity of a child. The Maid of Lisieux had ever in memory the invitation and the promises of her Spouse: "*Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me.*"[1] "*You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you; as one whom the Mother caresseth, so will I comfort you.*"[2]

Conscious of her weakness she abandoned herself entirely to God, and leaning upon Him she laboured to acquire—at the cost of every sacrifice, and of an utter yet joyous abdication of her own will—the perfection she arrived at. We need not be surprised if in Thérèse was accomplished the word of Christ: "*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven.*"[3] In her catechism lessons she drank in the pure doctrine of Faith, from the golden book of *The Imitation of Christ* she learned asceticism, in the writings of St. John of the Cross she found her mystical theology. Above all, she nourished heart and soul with the inspired Word of God on which she meditated assiduously, and the Spirit of Truth taught her what He hides as a rule from the wise and prudent and reveals to the humble. Indeed, God enriched her with

A QUITE EXCEPTIONAL WISDOM,

so that she was enabled to trace out for others a sure way of salvation.

That superabundant share of divine light and grace enkindled in Thérèse so ardent a flame of love, that she lived by it alone, rising above all created things, till in the end it consumed her; so much so that shortly before her death she could candidly avow she had

NEVER GIVEN GOD ANYTHING BUT LOVE.

Evidently it was under the influence of that burning

[1] Prov. ix. 4. [2] Isa. lxvi. 12, 13. [3] Matt. xviii. 4.

charity that the Maid of Lisieux took the resolution of doing all things for the love of Jesus, with the sole object of pleasing Him, of consoling His Divine Heart, and of saving a multitude of souls who would love Him eternally. We have proof that on entering into Paradise she began at once, there also, this work among souls, when we see the mystical shower of roses which God permitted her, and still permits her to let fall upon earth, as she had ingenuously foretold.

Therefore do We desire earnestly that *all* the Faithful of Christ should render themselves worthy of partaking in the abundant profusion of graces resulting from the intercession of "little Thérèse." But We desire much more earnestly that

ALL THE FAITHFUL SHOULD STUDY HER IN ORDER TO COPY HER,

becoming *children* themselves, since otherwise they cannot, according to the oracle of the Master, arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven.

If the way of spiritual childhood became general, who does not see how easily would be realised the reformation of human society which We set ourselves to accomplish at the commencement of our Pontificate, and more especially in the promulgation of this Jubilee. We, therefore, adopt as our own the prayer of the new St. Thérèse with which she ends her invaluable autobiography: "O Jesus, We beseech Thee to cast Thy glance upon the vast number of little souls, and to choose in this world a legion of little victims worthy of Thy love." Amen.

The Papal Documents

Address of Pius XI

To the Pilgrims of Bayeux and Lisieux, May 18, 1925

You may well be proud, dear sons of France, for these are your days of glory, and it is indeed rare to find a glory so fascinating, so world-wide as yours.

FEW SAINTS HAVE BEEN GOD'S PRIVILEGED ONES TO THE SAME DEGREE,

and few have given to Him as much as your—as our—dear little Saint.

Lisieux is not the least among the towns of France. We have read of its noble Cathedral, with its exquisite Lady Chapel erected in reparation to St. Joan of Arc. Industrially, too, it is a place of importance, but what is that beside the storm, the deluge of glory that has descended to-day upon Lisieux?—a glory that will not pass away, but will endure for ever. St. Thérèse crowns its historical splendour; for none but the Saints enjoy the privilege of a fame that is imperishable and without stain. The glory of a great name, the honour that Science brings—all this is confined to a few, the populace passes it by. It is nothing in comparison to the superhuman grandeur that finds its votaries wherever there is a child of the Catholic Church; penetrating cities, towns, villages, and homes; and Lisieux has reached the topmost peak of that glory.

Thérèse was the first We beatified and the first We canonised—an event most rare in the history of modern Saints. Let your lives be your thanksgiving to her who from the cloister offers us an example of perfection that

EVERYONE CAN AND SHOULD IMITATE.

She desires to draw us along *her little way;* she teaches us a childlike simplicity which is the reverse of childish;

she preaches purity, cleanness of heart, candour of soul, and an irresistible love of goodness, truth, and sincerity. *Spiritual childhood* is the fruit of the will—she is its revelation.

HER LITTLE WAY IS BEAUTIFUL, FRUITFUL AND SAFE.

It is a way of peace and holiness—a new omen to the world: *omen novum.*

How different society and home life would be if everyone took to heart the lesson of St. Thérèse! What a transformation would be wrought in the world if men would return to the simplicity of our Saint, that is, to the simplicity of the Gospel. Yesterday's feast stands out as a magnificent triumph that will remain memorable even in this city, accustomed to scenes of grandeur. What a spectacle met our eyes as We looked from the Altar! And you were the chosen ones of that vast assembly. What piety, what devotion, what silence!—an almost miraculous silence in that huge crowd, recalling the inspired word: "*Silence, it is the Lord!*"

The whole Church of Rome is grateful to Lisieux for having favoured it with a gift so exquisitely beautiful, so fruitful in spiritual joy. But you in your turn feel grateful to the Church, the inexhaustible creator of Saints. For to-day she gives back to you your "little Thérèse," now transformed into

THE GREAT ST. THÉRÈSE.

Since her intercession is so powerful, what can you not hope to obtain at her hands, thanks to the justifiable preferences of her who promised the "Roses"! What does she not reserve for her town of Lisieux and her land of France! Remember that it is of a daughter of France that we are singing the praises. The days are difficult, and our thoughts go over to that land so admirable in its faithful and in its priests. Providence has its delicate and magnificent ways of making amends, and so it offers salvation to France through a new Joan of Arc, all resplendent with glory.

The Papal Documents

Address of Pius XI

To 700 members of the Association of Notre Dame de Salut, May 19, 1925, Pilgrims to Rome for the Canonisation of St. Thérèse

Beloved Sons, to each of you We extend our warm congratulations. The occasion which has brought you to your Father in Christ is the high honour God has just paid to your, nay to *our* St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus—there are many reasons for dividing this treasure! You have seen the marvels wrought by the Master through this child of His Heart. You have tasted with ourselves the celestial sweetness of this feast: it was Heaven come down to earth—it was earth transported to Heaven. The little, the great St. Thérèse remains beyond the blue sky to shower down the "Roses" we are entitled to expect from her inasmuch as she has promised them. It is she who has prepared for you the rich treasures of the Holy Year, treasures of fear and pardon and consolation. . . . We think that all is said when We say that while blessing you, it is all France that We bless, the France of your, of our "little" Thérèse of the Child Jesus. (*Annales:* June 15, 1925.)

Pius XI and Cardinal Dougherty

In the afternoon of May 17, Pius XI granted an audience to Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, a pilgrim to Rome for the canonisation of St. Thérèse. For the space of an hour the Holy Father spoke to the eminent prelate of his "*first Saint*," and confessed that never in his life had he felt so happy. He congratulated the Cardinal on having crossed the

seas to share in that wonderful glorification of the Little Flower—"whom," he added, "you in America call the *Little Flower*, but whom I call my *guiding-star*." The Cardinal spoke of his scruples with regard to leaving his diocese in order to assist at the September festivities in Lisieux. "It is not a permission, but a message, I give you," answered His Holiness. "And when you reach Lisieux, you will gather together the Carmelites to tell them of the magnificent festival of to-day, and impart to them my Apostolic Benediction." (*Annales: June* 15, 1925.)

BULL OF CANONISATION OF ST. THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS

(*Vehementer exultamus hodie.*)

VEHEMENTLY do We exult this day, and We are filled with the greatest joy, because it is granted to Us who beatified the daughter of Carmel—Thérèse of the Child Jesus, and proposed her as a model, to celebrate now her canonisation, under the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and under our own authority.

This Virgin, truly wise and prudent, walked in the way of the Lord in the simplicity of her soul, and being made perfect in a short space, fulfilled a long time. Thereafter while still in the flower of her years, she was called to Paradise to receive the crown which her heavenly Spouse had prepared for her. During her lifetime she was known only to a few, but immediately after her saintly death her fame spread abroad in marvellous fashion throughout the whole Christian world, on account of the innumerable wonders wrought

by Almighty God at her intercession. Indeed, it seemed as if, in accordance with her dying promise, she were letting fall upon earth a shower of Roses. Hence it came to pass that Holy Church decided to bestow upon her the high honours reserved for the Saints without observing the statutory delays.

The child was born at Alençon in the diocese of Séez, in France, on January 2, 1873, of a father and a mother remarkable for their piety—Louis Stanislaus Martin and Marie Zélie Guérin. On January 4 she was baptised, receiving the name of Marie Françoise Thérèse.

Scarcely had she passed the age of four years and a half when she was bereft of her mother, and so became a prey to the deepest sorrow. Her education was thenceforth entrusted to her sisters, Marie and Pauline, whom she strove to obey perfectly in all things, the while she lived under the watchful care of her well-beloved father. Thanks to her teachers, Thérèse hastened like a giant along the way to perfection. From her earliest years it was her chief delight to talk frequently of God, and she always kept before her mind the thought that she must not inflict the slightest pain on the Holy Child Jesus.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit she longed to lead a most holy life and

PROMISED EARNESTLY THAT SHE WOULD REFUSE GOD NOTHING

He should seem to ask of her, a resolution she endeavoured to keep until death. As soon as she had reached the age of nine she was given into the charge of the Benedictine nuns of Lisieux, with whom she spent the day, returning home at nightfall. Though younger than the other scholars, she outstripped them all in progress and piety, studying the mysteries of our Faith with such zeal and insight that the chaplain of

the convent styled her his "theologian," or the "little doctor." As time passed she learned by heart the whole of that admirable book, *The Imitation of Christ*, while the Sacred Scriptures became so familiar to her, that in her writings she used them aptly, frequently, and with authority.

In her tenth year, she was long afflicted by a mysterious and deadly disease from which, as she herself narrates, she was freed through Our Blessed Lady, to whom she had been making a novena under the invocation of Our Lady of Victories, and who appeared to her with a smile upon her lips. Thereafter, filled with angelic fervour, she made her soul ready for the sacred Banquet in which we partake of the Body of Christ.

As soon as she had tasted of the Eucharistic Bread, she felt an insatiable hunger for that heavenly Food, and, as if inspired, she begged of Jesus, her sole delight, to "change for her into bitterness all human consolation." Then, all aflame with love for Christ and His Church, she had a most keen desire to enter among the Discalced Carmelites, so that by her self-denial and continual sacrifices

"SHE MIGHT BRING HELP TO PRIESTS AND MISSIONARIES AND THE ENTIRE CHURCH,"

and might gain innumerable souls for Jesus Christ. At the approach of death she promised that when with God she would continue this work.

While yet but fourteen years old, on account of her tender age, she met with serious opposition on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities regarding her vocation to the cloister. These difficulties she surmounted with a strength of soul wellnigh incredible, and in spite of her natural shyness, she revealed her intention to our predecessor, Leo XIII of happy memory. The Pontiff remitted the matter to the decision of the Superiors. Though baulked of her desire, and stricken with grief,

nevertheless she was perfectly submissive to the divine will.

After this stern trial of her patience and her vocation, on the ninth day of April, 1888, with the approval of her Bishop, she entered the Carmelite Monastery of Lisieux. In Carmel God wonderfully trained the heart of Thérèse, who, imitating the hidden life of Our Lady at Nazareth, like a well-watered garden put forth the flowers of every virtue, but most of all those of a burning love for God and a most ardent charity for her neighbour, inasmuch as she had thoroughly understood that commandment of the Lord: "*Love one another as I have loved you.*"

In order more and more to give pleasure to Jesus Christ, having dwelt upon that invitation given in Scripture: "*If anyone is little, let him come unto Me,*" she desired to be a little one in spirit, and thenceforth with a childlike and perfect trust she surrendered herself entirely and for ever to God, as to a most loving Father. This way of spiritual childhood, in keeping with the doctrine of the Gospel, she taught to others, especially to the novices, whom out of obedience she had undertaken to train in the exercise of the virtues of the religious life, and then filled with a holy and apostolic zeal [by her writings]

SHE ENTHUSIASTICALLY OPENED UP THE WAY OF EVANGELICAL SIMPLICITY

to a world puffed up with pride, "*loving vanity and searching after falsehood.*"

Jesus, her Spouse, set her completely on fire with a longing to suffer both in body and in soul. Realising with the utmost sorrow how Divine Love was on all sides forgotten, two years before her death she offered herself wholeheartedly as a victim to "*God's Merciful Love.*" Then, as it is reported, she was wounded by a flaming dart, so that, consumed by the divine fire, rapt in ecstasy, with the cry of "My God, I love Thee!"

upon her lips, she went to her reward at the age of twenty-four. It was on September 30, 1897, that she took flight to her Spouse, and thus, according to the well-known eulogy of Holy Scripture: "*Having been made perfect in a short space, she fulfilled a long time.*"

The funeral rites were duly carried out, and she was buried in the cemetery of Lisieux. From there her fame spread throughout the world and her sepulchre became glorious. Scarcely had she entered Paradise than she began to fulfil by innumerable miracles—as she still continues to fulfil—her promise of sending down to earth a perpetual shower of Roses, that is, of graces. The high esteem which she enjoyed among those who knew her in life was wonderfully increased after her death.

Urged by her great reputation for holiness, many Cardinals, Bishops, and Religious Superiors sent petitions to Pope Pius X, begging that her cause of canonisation would be introduced. The Holy Father hearkened to the many prayers, and on the ninth of June, 1914, signed the decree of the Commission of the Introduction of the Cause, which was entrusted to the Postulator-General of the Discalced Carmelites, Reverend Father Rodrigo of St. Francis of Paula.

The Process having been carried through its various stages, and the heroic nature of the virtues practised by Thérèse having been duly inquired into, the General Congregation was held on August 2, 1921, in presence of Pope Benedict XV. His Eminence, Cardinal Vico, Ponent of the Cause, submitted for discussion the question of the heroism of the Servant of God in practising the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, as also the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance. The Cardinals and Consulters present gave their vote, and after delaying in order to obtain further light from God, Our Predecessor promulgated his decision on the eve of the

Assumption, to the effect that the Venerable Thérèse had practised the above virtues to an heroic degree.

SO RAPID AND TRIUMPHANT WAS THE PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE

that at once two miracles were proposed for examination, chosen out of a multitude of prodigies said to have been wrought throughout the Christian world by the powerful intercession of the Venerable Thérèse. The first concerned Sister Louise of St. Germain, of the Daughters of the Cross, victim of an organic disease, namely, a grave ulcer in the stomach, of hæmorrhagic nature. On having recourse to the intercession of Thérèse she was restored to perfect health, as three eminent doctors have unanimously testified at the request of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The second miracle, somewhat similar to the first, was the cure of the young seminarist, Charles Anne, victim of pulmonary hæmoptysis, of the cavitary stage. He confidently invoked the aid of the Servant of God and was perfectly cured. This is clear from the testimony of the three doctors, and from the reasons on which they based their decisions.

After the Antepreparatory and Preparatory Congregation, the General Congregation, on January 30, 1923, discussed in our presence the miraculous nature of three cures. According to custom We reserved our decision in order to obtain further assistance from God, and on Quinquagesima Sunday, February 11, 1923, Feast of the Apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes, and eve of the first anniversary of our coronation, We decided to make it known. In the presence of Cardinal Vico, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, and others of its members, We solemnly declared the above instantaneous and complete cures to be beyond doubt miraculous, and We gave orders for the promulgation of a Decree to that effect.

Shortly after, on March 6, Cardinal Vico, at another

general reunion of the Congregation of Rites, put the question: "The virtues of the Venerable Servant of God and the two miracles required having been formally recognised, can the Beatification safely be proceeded with?" The decision was unanimously in the affirmative. After a brief delay, on the Feast of St. Joseph, We solemnly declared that in all safety Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus could receive the honours of Beatification, and We ordained the publication of the Brief for the ceremony in the Vatican Basilica. In the same Patriarchal Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles

AMID AN OUTPOURING OF UNIVERSAL JOY THE SERVANT OF GOD BECAME BLESSED THÉRÈSE.

Hearing of the fresh prodigies accomplished by Thérèse of the Child Jesus, We commissioned the Sacred Congregation of Rites on July 27, 1923, to take up anew the Cause of the *Beata*. On July 11, 1924, We ratified a decree of the Sacred Congregation which declared that the examinations in the dioceses of Parma [Italy] and Malines [Belgium], concerning miracles attributed to Blessed Thérèse were valid processes.

Gabriella Trimusi, who at the age of twenty-three had entered the Convent of the Poor Daughters of the Sacred Heart in Parma, began in 1913 to suffer in her left knee. She was in the habit of breaking the firewood across her knee, and this caused a lesion at the joint which prepared the way for a tuberculous infection. The trouble began with a dull pain, then the knee became swollen, and finally loss of appetite brought about emaciation. She was attended by two physicians, but without success, so that three years later she was sent to Milan, where injections, sunbaths, and various other forms of treatment were tried in vain; at the end of four years the spine itself became affected. The invalid returned to Parma, where several doctors diagnosed it as a case of tuberculous lesion, and prescribed general remedies. A radiograph of the knee revealed at this

period the existence of periostitis at the head of the tibia. Taken to the hospital, she was once more subjected to X-rays, but while there was attacked by Spanish influenza, and began to suffer fresh and constantly increasing pain in the vertebral column. All remedies proving ineffective, she was recommended by a priest on June 13, 1923, to join in a public novena in honour of Blessed Thérèse. She joined in the prayers, more concerned, however, over the health of the other nuns than her own. The close of the novena coincided with the close of a triduum in a neighbouring Carmel, and several of the nuns—Gabriella among the rest—sought permission to attend the ceremony. On her return, after slowly and painfully effecting the short journey, she entered the chapel of the Community, where the others were already assembled. The Superioress exhorted her to pray with confidence, and bade her go to her place. Strange to say, the invalid knelt down unconsciously on her knee without feeling the slightest pain, nor did she realise what she had done, on account of the increase of suffering at the moment in the spine. She next went to the refectory with the others, and, the meal finished, slowly mounted the stairs. Going into the first room she saw, she took off the apparatus she wore to support the spine, and cried out loudly:

"I AM CURED, I AM CURED!"

Sister Gabriella Trimusi returned at once to her labours and the exercises of religious life, without either pain or fatigue. The doctors appointed by the Sacred Congregation discussed the miracle at great length, and decided that the lesion at the knee was chronic arthrosynovitis and the spinal trouble was chronic spondulitis. These two lesions, rebellious to all other treatment, yielded to God's power, and Sister Gabriella by a miracle recovered the health which she still enjoys.

The story of the second miracle is more brief. In October, 1919, Maria Pellemans was a victim of

pulmonary tuberculosis, and this was followed by gastritis and enteritis, both of them likewise of a tuberculous nature. She was medically attended at home, then in a sanatorium. In August, 1920, she went to Lourdes, but all to no purpose. In March, 1923, she accompanied a small band of pilgrims to Lisieux, and

WHILE KNEELING AT THE TOMB OF THE BLESSED THÉRÈSE SHE WAS SUDDENLY RESTORED TO PERFECT HEALTH.

Three specially appointed doctors made a favourable report to the Sacred Congregation on both miracles.

In these cures the reality of the miraculous nature admitted of no doubt whatsoever, indeed it shone with unwonted splendour on account of the special circumstances in which the prodigies occurred. For that reason, on March 17, 1925, in a General Congregation, Cardinal Vico sought the verdict of the Cardinals and Consulters, based on the unanimous decision of the medical experts. We ourselves reserved our opinion until March 19, Feast of St. Joseph, when in the presence of the Cardinal Prefect and other dignitaries of the Sacred Congregation of Rites We solemnly proclaimed the two cures to be of a certainty miraculous. On March 29, after having received the unanimous vote of the Cardinals and the Consulters, We solemnly declared that the Canonisation of the Blessed Thérèse could be proceeded with in safety.

After all these preliminaries, in order to comply with the prescriptions laid down by our Predecessors, and to enhance the splendour of the august ceremony, We convoked a Secret Consistory of the Cardinals on March 30, to ask their advice on the question of the solemn canonisation. Cardinal Vico spoke eloquently on the life and miracles of Blessed Thérèse of the Child Jesus, and warmly begged that she be raised to the highest honours. Each of the Cardinals expressed his

opinion on the matter in question. On April 2 We held a Public Consistory, at which after an able discourse by the Consistorial advocate, John Guasco, all the Cardinals exhorted Us to give a final decision. We, however, invited by special letters not merely the neighbouring Bishops, but also those most remote to come to Us and pronounce their opinion. Many came from various countries, and on April 22 took part in a semi-public Consistory, after having acquainted themselves—by means of an abridgement—with the life and miracles of the *Beata*, and all the process gone through by the Congregation of Rites. Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops united themselves to the Cardinals, urging upon Us to celebrate this canonisation.

We therefore decided to celebrate it on May 17, in the Vatican Basilica, and exhorted the faithful to redouble their prayers, both for their own spiritual benefit and for our guidance by the Spirit of God.

ON THIS MOST HAPPY AND DESIRED DAY

the secular and regular clergy of Rome, the Prelates and Officials of the Curia, and finally all the Patriarchs, Bishops and Abbots then in the Eternal City gathered in the Vatican Basilica, the same being magnificently decorated. We ourselves brought up the rear of the procession. Then our Venerable Brother, Anthony Cardinal Vico, after a speech by Virgil Jacoucci, Consistorial advocate, set forth to Us the desire of the Episcopate, and of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, that We should place among the Saints Blessed Thérèse of the Child Jesus, whom already We had proclaimed the patroness of the Missions and Noviciates of the Order. A second and a third time they renewed their petition. Then after earnest prayers for light: "In honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the glory of the Catholic Faith, by the authority of Jesus Christ, of Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, after mature deliberation, and at the request of the

Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops, We declared that the professed nun of the Order of Discalced Carmelites,

THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS, WAS A SAINT

and was to be inscribed in the calendar of the Saints, memory of her to be kept on October the third of each year. Finally We returned fervent thanks to God for so great a favour, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, granted a Plenary Indulgence, and ordained the publication of the Decree, to be signed by all the Cardinals and by ourselves.

TO-DAY, FAITHFUL FLOCK OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH OFFERS A NEW AND MOST NOBLE MODEL OF VIRTUE FOR ALL OF YOU TO CONTEMPLATE UNCEASINGLY.

For the peculiar characteristic of the sanctity to which God called Thérèse of the Child Jesus lies chiefly in this, that having heard the Divine call she obeyed with the utmost promptness and fidelity. Without going beyond the common order of things, in her way of life she followed out and fulfilled her vocation with such alacrity, generosity, and constancy that she reached an heroic degree of virtue. In our own day when men seek so passionately after temporal goods this young maiden lived in our midst practising in all simplicity and devotedness the Christian virtues in order to honour God and to win eternal life. May her example strengthen in virtue and lead to a more perfect life,

NOT ONLY THE CLOISTERED SOULS BUT THOSE LIVING IN THE WORLD.

In our present needs let us all invoke the patronage of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, that by her intercession a shower of Roses, that is, of the graces we require, may descend upon us. All of which We solemnly affirm out of the fulness of the Apostolic authority, and if anyone contravene our Decree—he

shall incur the wrath of God and of St. Peter and St. Paul. Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, May 17, 1925, in the fourth year of our Pontificate, I, Pius, Bishop of the Catholic Church, *et cetera.*

[The signatures of thirty-six Cardinals follow that of the Holy Father. Several of them are given below.]

EGO PIUS ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE EPISCOPUS.
EGO RAPHAEL CARD. MERRY DEL VAL.
EGO FRANCISCUS CARD. BOURNE.
EGO AIDANUS CARD. GASQUET.
EGO DIONYSIUS CARD. DOUGHERTY.
EGO JOANNES CARD. BONZANO, ETC.
†A. CARD. VICO, S.R.C. PRAEFECTUS.

MOTTO OF THE LITTLE FLOWER

(Taken from St. John of the Cross)

"LOVE IS REPAID BY LOVE ALONE"

"DAYS OF GRACE GRANTED BY THE LORD TO HIS LITTLE SPOUSE"

Birthday	*January* 2, 1873
Baptism	*January* 4, 1873
The Smile of Our Lady	*May* 10, 1883
First Communion	*May* 8, 1884
Confirmation	*June* 14, 1884
Conversion	*December* 25, 1886
Audience with Leo XIII	*November* 20, 1887
Entry into the Carmel	*April* 9, 1888
Clothing	*January* 10, 1889
Our Great Treasure	*February* 12, 1889
Profession	*September* 8, 1890
Taking of the Veil	*September* 24, 1890
My Oblation	*June* 9, 1895

This list of anniversaries was found in the manuscript of the Saint's autobiography. The "Treasure" referred to was the great trial of her father's illness.

The following dates will interest her clients:

Entered Heaven	*September* 30, 1897
Cause Begun (Writings)	*February* 10, 1910
Interrogation of "Pauline"	*August* 12, 1910
First Exhumation	*September* 6, 1910
Cause Introduced (Pius X.)	*June* 10, 1914
Second Exhumation	*August* 9, 1917
Venerable (Benedict XV.)	*August* 14, 1921
Translation of Relics	*March* 26, 1923
Beatified (Pius XI.)	*April* 29, 1923
Canonised (Pius XI.)	*May* 17, 1925

COUNSELS AND REMINISCENCES OF SAINT THÉRÈSE, THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

COUNSELS AND REMINISCENCES

MOST of what follows has been gathered from the conversations of Saint Thérèse with her novices. Her advice cannot but prove helpful to souls within the cloister, and likewise to many in the world who may be attracted by her simple and easy *little way* to God.

* * * * *

"You remind me," she said to a novice who had lost heart at the thought of her imperfections, "of a little child just learning how to stand on its feet, yet determined to climb a flight of stairs in order to find its mother. Time after time it tries to set its tiny foot upon the lowest step, and each time it stumbles and falls. . . . Do as that little one did. By the practice of all the virtues keep on lifting your foot to climb the ladder of perfection, but do not imagine you can yourself succeed in mounting even the very first step. God asks of you nothing but goodwill. From the top of the ladder He looks down lovingly; and presently, touched by your fruitless efforts, He will take you in His arms to His kingdom, never to be parted from Him again. But if you leave off lifting your foot, your stay on the ground will indeed be a long one."

* * * * *

"One must *keep little* in order to make quick progress along the path of divine love. That is how I have done, and now I can sing with our holy Father, St. John of the Cross:

"'By stooping so low, so low,
I mounted so high, so high,
That I was able to reach my goal.'"

* * * * *

A temptation seemed irresistible, and the novice said to her: "This time I cannot get over it!" "Why try to overcome?" she made answer. "Rather try to undergo. It is all very well for great souls to soar above the clouds when the storm bursts. We have simply to stand in the rain. What does it matter if we get wet? We can dry ourselves in the sunshine of love.

"You recall to me a little incident of my childhood. One day a horse was standing in front of our garden gate, hindering us from getting through. The others talked to him and tried to make him move. Meanwhile I quietly slipped between his legs. . . . Such is the advantage of being a little one."

* * * * *

"Our Lord said to the sons of Zebedee: '*To sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.*'[1] I fancy that those special thrones, refused to such great Saints and Martyrs, are reserved for little children. Was not this indeed foretold by David in the Psalms: '*The little Benjamin will preside amidst the assemblies*[2] of the Saints.'

"You do wrong to find fault, and to try to make everyone see things from your point of view. We desire to be *as little children*. Now, little children do not know what is best. Everything is right in their eyes. Let us imitate them. Besides, there is no merit in doing what our own reason tells us is right."

* * * * *

"My special favourites in Heaven are those who, so to speak, stole it, such as the Holy Innocents and the

[1] Matt. xx. 23. [2] Cf. Ps. lxvii. 28.

Good Thief. There are great Saints who won it by their works. I want to be like the thieves and to win it by stratagem—a stratagem of love which will open its gates to me and to poor sinners. In the Book of Proverbs the Holy Ghost encourages me, saying: '*Come to Me, little one, to learn subtlety!*'"[1]

* * * * *

"What would you do if you could begin over again your religious life?"

"I think I should do just as I have done."

"Then you do not feel like the hermit who said: 'Though I should have spent long years in penance, yet until my latest breath I should fear the fires of hell'?"

"No, I do not share that fear: I am too small. Little children do not suffer damnation."

"Tell us what we must do to be *as little children*. What do you mean by *keeping little?*"

"When we keep little we recognise our own nothingness and expect everything from the goodness of God, exactly as a little child expects everything from its father. Nothing worries us, not even the amassing of spiritual riches.

"Even among the very poor a little child is always given what he needs. Once, however, he is grown up, his father will no longer feed him, but tells him to find work and earn his living. Well, I do not want to hear my Heavenly Father talk like this to me, and so I have never wished to grow up. I feel incapable of earning my livelihood—of earning Life Eternal. And so I have always tried to be as a little child, occupied merely in gathering flowers of love and sacrifice with which to please Almighty God.

"Again, being as a little child with God means that we do not attribute to ourselves the virtues we may possess, in the belief that we are capable of something. It implies, on the contrary, our recognition of the fact that

[1] Cf. Prov. i. 4.

God places the treasure of virtue in the hand of His little child for him to use as he needs it, though all the while it is God's treasure.

"Finally, to *keep little* means not to lose courage at the sight of our faults. Little children often tumble, but they are too small to suffer grievous injury."

* * * * *

"Do not fear to tell Jesus that you love Him," she wrote to another of her novices during a retreat, "even though you may not actually feel that love. In this way you will compel Him to come to you, and carry you like a little child who is too weak to walk.

"It is indeed a heavy cross when everything looks black. But that does not depend entirely on yourself. Do all in your power to detach your heart from earthly cares, especially from creatures; then rest assured Our Lord will do the rest. He could not allow you to fall into the abyss. Be of good courage, child! In Heaven nothing will look black, everything will be dazzling white, bathed in the divine radiance of our Spouse, the pure white Lily of the Valley. Together we shall follow Him whithersoever He goeth. Meanwhile we must make good use of our life here below. Let us give Our Lord pleasure, let us by self-sacrifice give Him souls! Above all, let us be little, so little that everyone may tread us underfoot, without our even seeming to suffer pain.

"I am not surprised at my 'little one's' failures. She forgets she is both missionary and warrior, and so ought to forgo all childish consolations. It is such folly to pass time fretting, instead of resting quietly on the Heart of Jesus. Neither ought my 'little one' to be afraid in the dark, nor complain at not seeing the Beloved who carries her in His arms. She has only to shut her eyes—that is the one sacrifice God asks of her. If she does this, the dark will lose its terrors, because

she will not see it; and before long peace, if not joy, will return once more."

* * * * *

To help a novice to accept a humiliation she once told her in confidence:

"If I had not been received into the Carmel, I should have entered a Refuge and lived there unknown and despised among the poor 'penitents.' My joy would have been to pass for one of them, and I should have become an apostle among my companions, telling them my thoughts on the infinite mercy of God."

"But how could you have hidden your innocence from your Confessor?"

"I should have told him that while still in the world I made a general confession, and that it was forbidden me to repeat it."

* * * * *

"Oh! when I think of all I have to acquire!"

"Or rather to lose! It is Jesus who takes upon Himself to fill your soul according as you rid it of imperfections. I see clearly that you are mistaking the road, and that you will never arrive at the end of your journey. You want to climb up the mountain, whereas God wishes you to climb down. He is awaiting you below in the fruitful valley of humility."

* * * * *

"To me it seems that humility is truth. I do not know whether I am humble, but I do know that I see the truth in all things."

* * * * *

"Indeed you are a Saint!"

"No, I am not a Saint. I have never wrought the works of a Saint. *I am but a tiny soul whom Almighty God has loaded with His favours.*

"The truth of what I say will be made known to you in Heaven."

"But have you not always been faithful to those favours?"

"Yes, *from the age of three I have never refused Almighty God anything.* Still I cannot boast. See how this evening the tree-tops are gilded by the setting sun. So likewise my soul appears to you all shining and golden because it is exposed to the rays of Love. But should the divine Sun no longer shine, it would instantly be sunk in gloom."

"We too would like to become all golden—what must we do?"

"You must practise the little virtues. This is sometimes difficult, but God never refuses the first grace—courage for self-conquest; and if the soul corresponds to that grace, she at once finds herself in God's sunlight. The praise given to Judith has always struck me: '*Thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened.*'[1] In the onset we must act with courage. By this means the heart gains strength, and victory follows victory."

* * * * *

Saint Thérèse never raised her eyes at meals, but she composed the following prayer for one who found much difficulty in observing this point of the Rule:

"O Jesus, for Thy sake and in imitation of the example Thou gavest in the house of Herod, Thy two little spouses resolve to keep their eyes cast down in the refectory. When that impious king scoffed at Thee, O Infinite Beauty, no complaint came from Thy lips. Thou didst not even deign to fix on him Thine adorable eyes. He was not worthy of the favour, but we who are Thy spouses, we desire to draw Thy divine gaze upon ourselves. As often as we refrain from raising our eyes, we beg Thee to reward us by a glance of love, and we even dare ask Thee not to refuse this sweet

[1] Judith xv. 11.

glance when we fail in our self-control, for we will humble ourselves most sincerely before Thee."

* * * * *

I confided to her that I made no progress, and that consequently I had lost heart.

"Up to the age of fourteen," she said, "I practised virtue without tasting its sweetness. I desired suffering, but I did not think of making it my joy; that grace was vouchsafed me later. My soul was like a beautiful tree, the flowers of which had scarcely opened when they fell.

"Offer to God the sacrifice of never gathering any fruit off your tree. If it be His will that throughout your whole life you should feel a repugnance to suffering and humiliation—if He permits all the flowers of your desires and of your goodwill to fall to the ground without any fruit appearing, do not worry. At the hour of death, in the twinkling of an eye, He will cause rich fruits to ripen on the tree of your soul.

"We read in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: '*There is an inactive man that wanteth help, is very weak in ability, and full of poverty: yet the eye of God hath looked upon him for good, and hath lifted him up from his low estate, and hath exalted his head: and many have wondered at him, and have glorified God. . . . Trust in God, and stay in thy place. For it is easy in the eyes of God, on a sudden, to make the poor man rich. The blessing of God maketh haste to reward the just, and in a swift hour His blessing beareth fruit.*'"[1]

"But if I fall, I shall always be found imperfect, whereas you are looked upon as holy."

"That is, perhaps, because I have never desired to be considered so. . . . But it is better for you to be found imperfect. Here is your chance of merit. To believe oneself imperfect and others perfect—this is true happiness. Should earthly creatures think you wanting

[1] Ecclus. xi. 12, 13, 22, 23, 24.

in virtue, they rob you of nothing, and you are none the poorer: it is they who lose. For is there anything more sweet than the inward joy of thinking well of our neighbour?

"As for myself I am glad and rejoice, not only when I am looked upon as imperfect, but especially when I feel it is true. Compliments, on the other hand, do but displease me."

* * * * *

"God has a special love for you since He entrusts souls to your care."

"That makes no difference, and I am really only what I am in His eyes. It is not because He wills me to be His interpreter among you, that He loves me more; rather, He makes me your little handmaid. It is for you, and not for myself, that He has bestowed upon me those charms and those virtues which you see.

"I often compare myself to a little bowl filled by God with good things. All the kittens come to eat from it, and they sometimes quarrel as to which will have the largest share. But the Holy Child Jesus keeps a sharp watch. 'I am willing you should feed from My little bowl,' He says, 'but take heed lest you upset and break it.'

"In truth there is no great danger, because He keeps me on the ground. Not so with Prioresses; set, as they are, on tables, they run far more risks. Honours are always dangerous. What poisonous food is served daily to those in high positions! What deadly fumes of incense! A soul must be well detached from herself to pass unscathed through it all."

* * * * *

"It is a consolation for you to do good and to procure the glory of God. I wish I were equally favoured."

"What if God does make use of me, rather than of another, to procure His glory! Provided His kingdom

be established among souls, the instrument matters not. Besides, He has no need of anyone.

"Some time ago I was watching the flicker, almost imperceptible, of a tiny night-light. One of the Sisters came up and, having lit her own candle in the dying flame, passed it round to light the candles of the others. And the thought came to me: 'Who dare glory in their own good works?' It needs but one such faint spark to set the whole world on fire. We come in touch with burning and shining lights, set high on the candlestick of the Church, and we think we are receiving from them grace and light. But whence do they borrow their fire? Very possibly from the prayers of some devout and hidden soul whose inward shining is not apparent to human eyes, some soul of unrecognised virtue, and in her own sight of little worth—a dying flame!

"What mysteries we shall one day see unveiled! I have often thought that perhaps I owe all the graces with which I am laden to some little soul whom I shall only know in Heaven.

"It is God's will that, here below, souls shall distribute to one another by prayer the heavenly treasures with which He has enriched them. And this in order that, when they reach their everlasting Home, they may love one another with grateful hearts and with an affection far beyond that which reigns in the most perfect family circle upon earth.

"In Heaven there will be no looks of indifference, because all the Saints owe so much to one another. No envious glances will be cast, because the happiness of each of the Blessed is the happiness of everyone. With the Doctors of the Church we shall be like unto Doctors; with the Martyrs, like unto Martyrs; with the Virgins, like unto Virgins. Just as the members of one family are proud of each other, so without the least jealousy shall we take pride in our heavenly brothers and sisters.

"When we see the glory of the great Saints, and

know that through the secret workings of Providence we have helped them to attain it, our joy in their bliss may perhaps be as intense and as sweet as their own.

"And do you not think that the great Saints themselves, seeing what they owe to us little souls, will love us with a love beyond compare? Friendship in Paradise will be both sweet and full of surprises, of this I am certain. A shepherd boy may be the familiar friend of an Apostle or of a great Doctor of the Church, a little child may be in close intimacy with a Patriarch. . . . How I long to enter that Kingdom of Love!"

* * * * *

"Believe me, the smallest act of self-denial is worth more than the writing of pious books or of beautiful poems. When we feel keenly how incapable we are of doing anything worth while, the best remedy is to offer to God the good works of others. In this lies the benefit of the Communion of Saints. Recall to mind that beautiful verse of our holy father, St. John of the Cross:

"'Return, my dove! See how the breeze, stirred by thy wings, brings refreshment to the wounded Hart upon the hill.'

"You see, the Spouse, the wounded Hart, is not attracted by the beauty of the hills, but only by the breeze from the pinions of the dove—a breeze which one single stroke of the wing is sufficient to create."

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"The lowest place is the only spot on earth which is not open to envy. Here alone there is neither vanity nor affliction of spirit. Yet '*the way of a man is not his own*,'[1] and sometimes we find ourselves wishing for the things that dazzle. When that happens there is nothing for it but to take our stand among the imperfect and look upon ourselves as very little souls who at every

[1] Jer. x. 23.

instant need to be upheld by the goodness of God. He reaches out His hand to us, the very moment He sees us fully convinced of our nothingness, and hears us cry out: '*My foot stumbles, Lord, but Thy mercy is my strength.*'[1] Should we attempt great things, however, even under pretext of zeal, He deserts us. So all we have to do is to humble ourselves, to bear with meekness our imperfections. Herein lies—for us—true holiness."

* * * * *

One day I was complaining of being more tired than my Sisters, for, besides the ordinary duties, I had other work unknown to the rest. Saint Thérèse replied:

"I should like always to see you a brave soldier, never grumbling at hardships, but considering the wounds of your companions as most serious, and your own as mere scratches. You feel this fatigue so much because no one is aware of it.

"Now Blessed Margaret Mary, at the time she had two whitlows, confessed that she really only suffered from the hidden one. The other, which she was unable to hide, excited pity and made her an object of compassion. It is indeed a very natural feeling, this desire that people should know of our aches and pains, but in giving way to it we play the coward."

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"When we are guilty of a fault we must never attribute it to some physical cause, such as illness or the weather. We must ascribe it to our own imperfections, without being discouraged thereby. 'Occasions do not make a man frail, but show what he is.'"[2]

* * * * *

"God did not permit that our Mother should tell me to write my poems as soon as I had composed them, and I was so afraid of committing a sin against

[1] Cf. Ps. xciii. 18.

[2] *Imitation*, I. xvi. 4.

poverty that I would not ask leave. So I had to wait for some free time, and at eight o'clock in the evening I often found it extremely difficult to remember what I had composed in the morning.

"True, these trifles are a kind of martyrdom; but we must be careful not to alleviate the pain of the martyrdom by permitting ourselves, or securing permission for, what would tend to make the religious life both comfortable and agreeable."

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One day, as I was in tears, Saint Thérèse told me to avoid the habit of allowing others to see the trifles that worried me, adding that nothing made community life more trying than unevenness of temper.

"You are indeed right," I answered; "such was my own thought. Henceforward my tears will be for God alone. I shall confide my worries to One who will understand and console me."

"Tears for God!" she promptly replied, "that would never do. Far less to Him than to His creatures ought you to show a mournful face. He comes to our cloisters in search of rest—to forget the unceasing complaints of His friends in the world, who, instead of appreciating the value of the Cross, receive it more often than not with moans and tears. Frankly, this is not disinterested love. . . . *It is for us to console Our Lord, and not for Him to be always consoling us.* His Heart is so tender that if you cry He will dry your tears; but thereafter He will go away sad, since you did not suffer Him to repose tranquilly within you. Our Lord loves the glad of heart, the children that greet Him with a smile. When will you learn to hide your troubles from Him, or to tell Him gaily that you are happy to suffer for Him?

"The face is the mirror of the soul," she added, "and yours, like that of a contented little child, should always be calm and serene. Even when alone be

cheerful, remembering always that you are in the sight of the Angels."

* * * * *

I was anxious she should congratulate me on what, in my eyes, was an heroic act of virtue; but she said to me:

"Compare this little act of virtue with what Our Lord has the right to expect of you! Rather should you humble yourself for having lost so many opportunities of proving your love."

I was not satisfied with this answer. I resolved to find out how she herself would act under trial, and the occasion was not long in coming. Reverend Mother asked us to do some work which bristled with difficulties; and, on purpose, I made it still more difficult for our Mistress.

Not for one second, however, could I detect her in fault; and, heedless of the great fatigue involved, she remained gracious and amiable, eager throughout to help others at her own expense. At last I could resist no longer, and I confessed to her what my thoughts had been.

"How comes it," I said, "that you can be so patient? You are ever the same—calm and full of joy." "That was not always the case with me," she replied, "but since I have left off thinking about myself, I live the happiest life possible."

* * * * *

Our dear Mistress used to say that during recreation, more than at any other time, we should find opportunities for practising virtue.

"If your desire be to draw great profit, do not go with the idea of enjoying yourself, but rather with the intention of entertaining others and practising self-denial. Thus, for instance, if you are telling one of the Sisters something you think entertaining, and she

should interrupt to tell you something else, show yourself interested, even though in reality her story may not interest you in the least. Be careful, also, not to try to resume what you were saying. In this way you will leave recreation filled with a great interior peace and endowed with fresh strength for the practice of virtue, because you have not sought to please yourself, but others. If only we could realise what we gain by self-denial in all things!"

"You realise it, certainly, for you have always practised self-denial."

"Yes, I have forgotten myself, and I have tried not to seek myself in anything."

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"When someone knocks at our door, or when we are rung for, we must practise mortification and refrain from doing even another stitch before answering. I have practised this myself, and I assure you that it is a source of peace."

After this advice, and according as occasion offered, I promptly answered every summons. One day, during her illness, she was witness of this, and said:

"At the hour of death you will be very happy to find this to your account. You have just done something more glorious than if, through clever diplomacy, you had procured the goodwill of the Government for all religious communities and had been proclaimed throughout France as a second Judith."

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Questioned as to her method of sanctifying meals, she answered:

"In the refectory we have but one thing to do: perform a lowly action with lofty thoughts. I confess that the sweetest aspirations of love often come to me in the refectory. Sometimes I am brought to a standstill by the thought that were Our Lord in my place He

would certainly partake of those same dishes which are served to me. It is quite probable that during His lifetime He had food like ours—He must have eaten bread and fruit.

"Here are my little rubrics:

"I imagine myself at Nazareth, in the house of the Holy Family. If, for instance, I am served with salad, cold fish, wine, or anything pungent in taste, I offer it to St. Joseph. To our Blessed Lady I offer hot foods and ripe fruit, and to the Infant Jesus our feast-day fare, especially rice and preserves. But when I am served a wretched dinner I say cheerfully: 'To-day, my little one, it is all for you!'"

Thus in many pretty ways she hid her mortifications. One fast-day, however, when our Reverend Mother ordered her some special food, I found her seasoning it with wormwood because it was too much to her taste. On another occasion I saw her drinking very slowly a most unpleasant medicine. "Make haste," I said, "drink it off at once!" "Oh no!" she answered; "must I not profit of these small opportunities for penance since the greater ones are forbidden me?"

Towards the end of her life I learned that, during her noviciate, one of our Sisters, when fastening the scapular for her, ran the large pin through her shoulder, and for hours she bore the pain with joy. On another occasion she gave me proof of her interior mortification. I had received a most interesting letter which was read aloud at recreation during her absence. In the evening she expressed the wish to read it, and I gave it to her. Later on, when she returned it, I begged her to tell me what she thought of one of the points of the letter which I knew ought to have charmed her. She seemed rather confused, and after a pause she answered: "God asked of me the sacrifice of this letter because of the eagerness I displayed the other day . . . so I have not read it."

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When speaking to her of the mortifications of the Saints, she remarked: "It was well that Our Lord warned us: '*In My Father's House there are many mansions, if not I would have told you.*'[1] For, if every soul called to perfection were obliged to perform these austerities in order to enter Heaven, He would have told us, and we should have willingly undertaken them. But He has declared that, '*there are many mansions in His House.*' If there are some for great souls, for the Fathers of the desert and for martyrs of penance, there must also be one for little children. And in that one a place is kept for us, if we but love Him dearly together with Our Father and the Spirit of Love."

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"While in the world I used, on waking, to think of all the pleasant or unpleasant things which might happen throughout the day, and if I foresaw nothing but worries I got up with a heavy heart. Now it is the other way about. I think of the pains and of the sufferings awaiting me, and I rise, feeling all the more courageous and light of heart in proportion to the opportunities I foresee of proving my love for Our Lord, and of gaining —mother of souls as I am—my children's livelihood. Then I kiss my crucifix, and, laying it gently on my pillow, I leave it there while I dress, and I say: 'My Jesus, Thou hast toiled and wept enough during Thy three-and-thirty years on this miserable earth. Rest Thee, to-day! It is my turn to suffer and to fight.'"

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One washing-day I was sauntering towards the laundry, and looking at the flowers as I strolled along. Sœur Thérèse was behind, and, quickly overtaking me, remarked quietly: "Is that the way people hurry when they have children, and are obliged to work to procure them food?"

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[1] John xiv. 2.

"Do you know which are my Sundays and holidays? They are the days on which God tries me most."

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I was distressed at my lack of courage, and our Saint said to me: "You are complaining of what ought to be your greatest happiness. If you fought only when you felt ready for the fray, where would be your merit? What does it matter even if you have no courage, provided you behave as though you were really brave? If you feel too lazy to pick up a bit of thread, and yet do so for love of Jesus, you gain more merit than for a much nobler action done in an impulse of fervour. Instead of grieving, be glad that, by allowing you to feel your own weakness, Our Lord is furnishing you with an occasion of saving a greater number of souls."

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I asked her whether Our Lord was not displeased at the sight of my many failings. "Have no fear!" she replied. "He whom you have chosen for your Spouse has every imaginable perfection; but—dare I say it?—He has one great infirmity—He is blind. And He is so ignorant of arithmetic that He cannot even add. These two defects, deplorable in an earthly bridegroom, do but make ours infinitely more lovable. If He were so clear-sighted as to distinguish all our sins, if He were so quick at figures as to reckon up readily their number, He would send us straight back to our nothingness. But His love for us makes Him actually blind.

"If the greatest sinner on earth should repent at the moment of death, and draw his last breath in an act of love, neither the many graces he had abused, nor the many sins he had committed, would stand in his way. Our Lord would see nothing, count nothing but the sinner's last prayer, and without delay He would receive Him into the arms of His mercy.

"But to make Him thus blind and incapable of reckoning the number of our sins, we must approach

Him through His Heart—on that side He is defenceless."

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I had grieved her and I went to ask her pardon. "If you knew how I feel!" she exclaimed. "Never have I more clearly understood the love with which Jesus receives us when we seek His forgiveness. If I, His poor little creature, feel so tenderly towards you when you come back to me, what must pass through Our Lord's Divine Heart when we return to Him? Far more quickly than I have just done will He blot out our sins from His memory. Nay, He will love us even more tenderly than before we fell."

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I had an immense dread of the judgements of God, and no argument of Sœur Thérèse could remove it. One day I put to her the following objection: "We are often told that in God's sight the angels themselves are not pure. So how can you expect me to be otherwise than full of fear?"

She replied, "There is but one means of compelling God not to judge us: we must take care to appear before Him empty-handed." "And how can I do that?" "It is quite simple: lay nothing by, spend your treasures as fast as you gain them. Were I to live to be eighty, I should always be poor, because I cannot economise. All my earnings are immediately spent on the ransom of souls.

"Were I to await the hour of death to tender my trifling coins, Our Lord would not fail to discover in them some base metal, and they would certainly have to be refined in Purgatory. Is it not recorded of certain great Saints that, on appearing before the divine tribunal, their hands laden with merit, they have yet been sent to that place of expiation, because in God's eyes all our justice is unclean?"

"But," I replied, "if God does not judge our good

actions, He will judge our bad ones." "Do not say that! Our Lord is justice itself, and if He does not judge our good actions, neither will He judge our bad ones. It seems to me that for victims of love there will be no judgement. God will rather hasten to reward with eternal delights His own love which He will behold burning in their hearts."

"To enjoy such a privilege, would it be enough to repeat that Act of Oblation which you have composed?" "Oh no! words do not suffice. To be a true victim of love we must surrender ourselves entirely. . . . *Love will consume us only in the measure of our self-surrender.*"

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I was grieving bitterly over a fault I had committed. "Take your crucifix," she said, "and kiss it." I kissed the feet.

"Is that how a child kisses its father? Throw your arms at once round His neck and kiss His face." When I had done so, she continued: "That is not sufficient—He must return your caress." I had to press the crucifix to both my cheeks, whereupon she added: "Now, all is forgiven."

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I told her one day that if I must be reproached I preferred deserving it to being unjustly accused. "For my part," she replied, "I prefer to be rebuked unjustly, because, having nothing to reproach myself with, I offer gladly this little injustice to God. Then, humbling myself, I think how easily I might have deserved the reproach. The more you advance, the fewer the combats; or rather, the more easy the victory, because the good side of things will be more visible. Then your soul will soar above creatures. As for me, I feel utterly indifferent to all accusations because I have learned the hollowness of human judgement.

"Besides, when misunderstood and judged unfavourably, what benefit do we derive from defending ourselves? Leave things as they are, and say nothing. It is so sweet to allow ourselves to be judged anyhow, rightly or wrongly.

"It is not written in the Gospel that Saint Mary Magdalen put forth excuses when charged by her sister with sitting idle at Our Lord's feet. She did not say: 'Martha, if you knew the happiness that is mine and if you heard the words that I hear, you too would leave everything to share my joy and my repose.' No, she preferred to keep silent. . . . Blessed silence which gives such peace to the soul!"

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At a moment of temptation and struggle I received this note: "'*The just man shall correct me in mercy and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner perfume my head.*'[1] It is only by the just that I can be either reproved or corrected, because all my Sisters are pleasing to God. It is less bitter to be rebuked by a sinner than by a just man; but through compassion for sinners, to obtain their conversion, I beseech Thee, O my God, to permit that I may be well rebuked by those just souls who surround me. I ask also that the *oil of praise*, so sweet to our nature, *may not perfume my head*, that is to say, my mind, by making me believe that I possess virtues when I have merely performed a few good actions.

"Jesus! '*Thy Name is as oil poured out*,'[2] and it is in this divine perfume that I desire wholly to hide myself from all worldly eyes."

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"It is not playing the game to argue with a Sister that she is in the wrong, even when it is true, because we

[1] Cf. Ps. cxi. 5. [2] Cant. i. 2.

are not answerable for her conduct. We must not be *Justices of the peace*, but *Angels of peace* only."

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"You give yourselves up too much to what you are doing," she used to say to us; "you worry about the future as though it were in your hands. Are you much concerned at this moment as to what is happening in other Carmelite convents, and whether the nuns there are busy or otherwise? Does their work prevent you praying or meditating? Well, just in the same way, you ought to detach yourselves from your own personal labours, conscientiously spending on them the time prescribed, but with perfect freedom of heart. We read that the Israelites, while building the walls of Jerusalem, worked with one hand and held a sword in the other.[1] This is an image of what we should do: avoid being wholly absorbed in our work."

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"One Sunday," said the Saint, "I was going towards the chestnut avenue, my heart filled with glad expectation, for it was spring-time and I wanted to enjoy the beauties of nature. What a bitter disappointment! My dear chestnuts had been pruned, and the branches, already covered with buds, now lay on the ground. On seeing this havoc, and thinking that three years must elapse before it could be repaired, my heart felt very sore. But the grief did not last long. 'If I were in another convent,' I reflected, 'what would it matter to me if the chestnut-trees of the Carmel at Lisieux were cut down to the root? I will not worry about things that pass. God shall be my all. I will take my walks in the wooded groves of His love, whereon none dare lay hands.'"

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[1] Cf. 2 Esdras iv. 17

A novice asked certain Sisters to help her to shake some blankets. These blankets were somewhat old and worn, and she insisted, rather sharply, on their being handled with care. "What would you do," said the Saint to the impatient one, "if it were not your duty to mend these blankets? There would be no thought of self in the matter, and if you did call attention to the fact that they are easily torn, it would be done in quite an impersonal way. In all your actions you should avoid the least trace of self-seeking."

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Seeing one of our Sisters very much fatigued, I said to our Mistress: "It grieves me to see people suffer, especially those who are holy." She instantly replied: "I do not feel as you do. Saints who suffer never excite my pity. I know they have strength to bear their sufferings, and that through them they are giving great glory to God. But I compassionate greatly those who are not Saints, and who do not know how to profit by suffering. They indeed awake my pity. I would strain every nerve to help and comfort them."

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"If I were to live longer, I should like to be given the office of Infirmarian. I would not ask for it, but were it imposed through obedience, I should consider myself highly favoured. I think I should put all my heart into the work, mindful of Our Lord's words: '*I was sick, and you visited Me.*'[1] The infirmary bell should be for you as heavenly music, and you ought purposely to pass by the windows of the sick that it might be easy for them to summon you. Consider yourself as a little slave whom everyone has the right to command. Could you but see the Angels who from the heights of Heaven watch your combats in the arena! They are awaiting the end of the fight to crown you and

[1] Matt. xxv. 36.

cover you with flowers. You know that we claim to rank as *little martyrs* . . . but we must win our palms.

"God does not despise these hidden struggles with ourselves, so much richer in merit because they are unseen: '*The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities.*'[1] Through our little acts of charity, practised in the dark, as it were, we obtain the conversion of the heathen, help the missionaries, and gain for them plentiful alms, thus building both spiritual and material dwellings for our Eucharistic God."

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I had seen Mother Prioress showing, as I thought, more confidence and affection to one of our Sisters than she showed me. Expecting to win sympathy, I told my trouble to my Novice Mistress, and great was my surprise when she put me the question: "Do you think you love our Mother very much?" "Certainly! otherwise I should be indifferent if others were preferred to me."

"Well, I shall prove that you are absolutely mistaken, and that it is not our Mother that you love, but yourself. When we really love others, we rejoice at their happiness, and we make every sacrifice to procure it. Therefore if you had this true, disinterested affection, and loved our Mother for her own sake, you would be glad to see her find pleasure even at your expense. Now, since you think she has less satisfaction in talking with you than with another Sister, you ought not to grieve at being apparently neglected."

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I was distressed at my many distractions during prayers: "I also have many," she said, "but as soon as I am aware of them, I pray for those people the thought of whom is diverting my attention, and in this way they reap benefit from my distractions. . . . I

[1] Prov. xvi. 32.

accept all for the love of God, even the wildest fancies that cross my mind."

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I was regretting a pin which I had been asked for, and which I had found most useful. "How rich you are," she said; "you will never be happy!"

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The grotto of the Holy Child was in her charge, and, knowing that one of our Mothers greatly disliked perfumes, she never put any sweet-smelling flowers there, not even a tiny violet. This cost her many a real sacrifice. One day, just as she had placed a beautiful artificial rose at the foot of the statue, the Mother called her. Surmising that it was to bid her remove the rose, and anxious to spare her any humiliation, she took the flower to the good nun: "Look, Mother," said she, "how well nature is imitated nowadays: would you not think this rose had been freshly gathered from the garden?"

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"There are moments," she told us, "when we are so miserable within, that there is nothing for it but to get away from ourselves. At those times God does not oblige us to remain at home. He even permits our own company to become distasteful to us in order that we may leave it. Now I know no other means of exit save through the doorway of charitable works, on a visit to Jesus and Mary."

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"When I picture the Holy Family, the thought that does me most good is—the simplicity of their home-life. Our Lady and St. Joseph were well aware that Jesus was God, while at the same time great wonders were hidden from them, and—like us—they lived by faith. You have heard those words of the Gospel: '*They*

understood not the word that He spoke unto them';[1] and those others no less mysterious: '*His Father and Mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him.*'[2] They seemed to be learning something new, for this word 'wondering' implies a certain amount of surprise."

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"There is a verse in the Divine Office which I recite each day with reluctance: '*I have inclined my heart to do Thy justifications for ever, because of the reward.*'[3] I hasten to add in my heart: 'My Jesus, Thou knowest I do not serve Thee for sake of reward, but solely out of love and a desire to win Thee souls.'"

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"In Heaven only shall we be in possession of the clear truth. On earth, even in matters of Holy Scripture, our vision is dim. It distresses me to see the differences in its translations, and had I been a priest I would have learned Hebrew, so as to read the Word of God as He deigned to utter it in human speech."

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She often spoke to me of a well-known toy with which she had amused herself when a child. This was the kaleidoscope, shaped like a small telescope, through which, as it is made to revolve, one perceives an endless variety of pretty, coloured figures.

"This toy," she said, "excited my admiration, and for a long time I wondered what could produce so charming a phenomenon. One day, however, a careful examination showed that it consisted simply of tiny bits of paper and cloth scattered inside. Further scrutiny revealed three mirrors inside the tube, and the problem was solved. It became for me the illustration of a great truth.

"So long as our actions, even the most trivial, remain within love's kaleidoscope, the Blessed Trinity, figured

[1] Luke ii. 50. [2] Luke ii. 33. [3] Ps. cxviii. 112.

by the three mirrors, imparts to them a wonderful brightness and beauty. The eye-piece is Jesus Christ, and He, looking from outside through Himself into the kaleidoscope, finds all our works perfect. But, should we leave that ineffable abode of love, He would see nothing but the worthless chaff of worthless deeds."

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I told her of the strange phenomena produced by magnetism on persons who surrender their will to the hypnotiser. It seemed to interest her greatly, and next day she said to me: "Your conversation yesterday did me much good, and I long to be hypnotised by Our Lord. It was my waking thought, and I found it sweet to surrender Him my will. I want Him to take possession of my faculties in such wise that my acts may no more be my own acts or even human acts, but divine acts—inspired and guided by the Spirit of Love."

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Before my profession I received through my saintly Novice Mistress a very special grace. We had been washing all day. I was worn out with fatigue and harassed with spiritual worries. That night, before meditation, I wanted to speak to her, but she dismissed me with the remark: "That is the bell for meditation, and I have not time to console you; besides, I see plainly that it would be useless trouble. For the present, God wishes you to suffer alone." I followed her to meditation so discouraged that, for the first time, I doubted of my vocation. I should never be able to be a Carmelite. The life was too hard.

I had been kneeling for some minutes when all at once, in the midst of this interior struggle—without having asked or even wished for peace—I felt a sudden and extraordinary change. I no longer knew myself. My vocation appeared to me both beautiful and lovable. I saw the sweetness and priceless value of suffering. All the privations and fatigues of the religious life appeared

infinitely preferable to worldly pleasures, and I came away from my meditation completely transformed.

Next day I told my Mistress what had taken place, and seeing she was deeply touched, I begged to know the reason. "God is good," she exclaimed. "Last evening you inspired me with such profound pity that I prayed incessantly for you at the beginning of meditation. I besought Our Lord to bring you comfort, to change your dispositions, and show you the value of suffering. He has indeed heard my prayers."

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Being somewhat of a child in my ways, the Holy Child—to help me in the practice of virtue—inspired me with the thought of playing with Him, and I chose the game of *ninepins*. I imagined them of all sizes and colours, representing the souls I wished to reach. My love for the Holy Child was the ball.

In December, 1896, the novices received, for the benefit of the foreign Missions, various trifles towards a Christmas tree, and at the bottom of the box containing them was a *top*—quite a novelty in a Carmelite convent. My companions remarked: "What an ugly thing!—of what use will it be?" But I, who knew the game, caught hold of it, exclaiming: "Nay, what fun! it will spin a whole day without stopping if it be well whipped"; and thereupon I spun it round to their great surprise.

Our saintly Mistress was quietly watching us, and on Christmas night, after midnight Mass, I found in our cell the famous top, with a delightful letter addressed as follows:

To My Beloved Little Spouse

Player of Ninepins on the Mountain of Carmel

Christmas Night, 1896.

My beloved little Spouse,—I am well pleased with thee! All the year round thou hast amused Me

by playing at *ninepins*. I was so overjoyed, that the whole court of Angels was surprised and charmed. Several little cherubs have asked Me why I did not make them children. Others wanted to know if the melody of their instruments were not more pleasing to Me than thy joyous laugh when a ninepin fell at the stroke of thy love-ball. My answer to them was, that they must not regret they are not children, since one day they would play with thee in the meadows of Heaven. I told them also that thy smiles were certainly more sweet to Me than their harmonies, because these smiles were purchased by suffering and forgetfulness of self.

And now, My cherished Spouse, it is My turn to ask something of thee. Thou wilt not refuse Me—thou lovest Me too much. Let us change the game. Ninepins amuse Me greatly, but at present I should like to play at spinning a top, and, if thou dost consent, thou shalt be the top. I give thee one as a model. Thou seest that it is ugly to look at, and would be scorned by anyone who did not know the game. But at the sight of it a child would leap for joy and shout: "What fun! it will spin a whole day without stopping!"

Although thou too art not attractive, I—the little Jesus—love thee, and beg of thee to keep always spinning to amuse Me. True, it needs a whip to make a top spin. Then let thy Sisters supply the whip, and be thou most grateful to those who shall make thee turn fastest. When I have had plenty of fun, I shall bring thee to join Me here, and our games shall be full of unalloyed delight.—Thy little Brother,

JESUS.

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I had the habit of crying over the merest trifles, and this was a source of great pain to our Mistress. One day a bright idea occurred to her: taking a mussel-shell from her painting table, and holding my hands lest I

should prevent her, she gathered my tears in the shell, and soon they were turned into merry laughter.

"There," she said, "from now onwards I permit you to cry as much as you like on condition that it is into the shell!"

A week, however, before her death I spent a whole evening in tears at the thought of her fast-approaching end. She knew it, and said: "You have been crying. Was it into the shell?" I could not tell an untruth, and my answer grieved her. "I am going to die," she continued, "and I shall not be at rest about you unless you promise to follow faithfully my advice. I consider it of the utmost importance for the good of your soul."

I promised what she asked, begging leave, however, as a favour, to be allowed to cry at her death. "But," she answered, "why cry at my death? Those tears will certainly be useless. You will be bewailing my happiness! Still I have pity on your weakness, and for the first few days you have leave to cry, though afterwards you must again take up the shell."

It has cost me some heroic efforts, but I have been faithful. I have kept the shell at hand, and each time the wish to cry overcame me, I laid hold of the pitiless thing. However urgent the tears, the trouble of passing it from one eye to the other so distracted my thoughts, that before very long this ingenious method entirely cured me of my over-sensitiveness.

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Owing to a fault which had caused her much pain, but of which I had deeply repented, I intended to deprive myself of Holy Communion. I wrote to her of my resolution, and this was her reply: "Little flower, most dear to Jesus, by this humiliation your roots are feeding upon the earth. You must now open wide your petals, or rather lift high your head, so that the Manna of the Angels may, like a divine dew, come down to

strengthen you and supply all your wants. Good-night, poor little flower! Ask of Jesus that all the prayers offered for my cure may serve to increase the fire which ought to consume me."

* * * * *

"At the moment of Communion I sometimes liken my soul to that of a little child of three or four, whose hair has been ruffled and whose clothes have been soiled at play. This is a picture of what befalls me in my struggling with souls. But Our Blessed Lady comes promptly to the rescue, takes off my soiled pinafore, and arranges my hair, adorning it with a pretty ribbon or a simple flower. . . . Then I am quite nice, and able to seat myself at the Banquet of Angels without having to blush."

* * * * *

In the infirmary we scarcely waited for the end of her thanksgiving before seeking her advice. At first, this somewhat distressed her, and she reproached us gently, but soon she yielded, saying: "I must not wish for more rest than Our Lord. When He withdrew into the desert after preaching, the crowds intruded on His solitude. Come, then, to me as much as you like; I must die sword in hand—'*having the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*'"[1]

* * * * *

"Advise us," we said to her, "how to profit by our spiritual instruction."

"Go for guidance with great simplicity, not counting too much on help which may fail you at any moment. And then you would have to say, like the Spouse in the Canticles: '*The keepers took away my cloak and wounded me. When I had gone a little beyond them, I found Him whom my soul loveth.*'[2] If you ask with humility and detachment about your Beloved,

[1] Eph. vi. 17. [2] Cf. Cant. v. 7, iii. 4.

the *keepers* will tell you. More often you will find Jesus only when you have passed by all creatures. Many times have I repeated this verse of the Spiritual Canticle of St. John of the Cross:

'Messengers, I pray, no more
Between us send, who know not how
To tell me what my spirit longs to know.
For they Thy charms who read—
For ever telling of a thousand more—
Make all my wounds to bleed,
While deeper than before
Doth an—I know not what!—my spirit grieve
With stammerings vague, and of all life bereave.'"

* * * * *

"It would not disturb me if (supposing the impossible), God Himself did not see my good actions. I love Him so much, that I would like to give Him joy without His knowing who gave it. When He does know, He is, as it were, obliged to make a return. I should not like to give Him the trouble."

* * * * *

"Had I been rich, I could never have seen a poor person hungry without giving him to eat. This is my way also in the spiritual life. There are many souls on the brink of hell, and as soon as I earn anything, it is scattered among sinners. The time has never come when I could say: 'Now I am going to work for myself.'"

* * * * *

"There are people who make the worst of everything. With me it is different. I always see the good side of things. Even if it be my lot to suffer without a ray of comfort, well, I make that my joy!"

* * * * *

"Whatever has come from God's hand has always pleased me, even those things which seemed to me less good and less beautiful than those vouchsafed to others."

* * * * *

"When I was a little girl staying with my aunt, I read a story in which a schoolmistress was highly praised for her tact in settling difficulties without hurting anyone. She would say to the one party: 'You are quite right,' and to the other: 'You are not in the wrong.' And I reflected, as I read: 'Now I never could behave like that, one must always tell the truth.' And I always tell the truth, though I admit that it is often more unpleasant for me. It would be far less trouble, when a novice comes with a grievance, to cast the blame upon the absent. Less trouble . . . yet I always say just what I mean, and if it makes people dislike me, that cannot be helped. The novices must not come to me if they do not want to be told the truth."

* * * * *

"Before a reproof [to a novice] bear fruit it must cost something and be free from the least trace of passion. Kindness must not degenerate into weakness. When we have had good reason for finding fault, we must not allow ourselves to worry over having given pain. It does more harm than good to seek out the delinquent for the purpose of consoling her. Left alone, she is compelled to look beyond creatures, and to turn to God; she is forced to see her faults and to humble herself. Otherwise she would become accustomed to expect consolation after a merited rebuke, and would act like a spoilt child who stamps and screams, knowing well that by this means its mother will be forced to return and dry its tears."

* * * * *

"'*Let the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, be ever in your mouth and in your hearts.*'[1] If we find any particular novice disagreeable we should not lose heart, still less leave off trying to reform her. We should wield *the sword of the Spirit*, and so correct her faults. Things should never be passed over for the

[1] Cf. Eph. vi. 17; Isa. lix. 21

sake of our own ease. We must carry on the war even when there is no hope of victory. Success matters nothing, and we must fight on, without ever saying: 'I shall gain nothing from that soul, she does not understand, there is nothing for it but to abandon her.' That would be acting like a coward. We must do our duty to the very end."

* * * * *

"Once upon a time, if any of my friends were in trouble, and I did not succeed in consoling them when they came to see me, I left the parlour quite heart-broken. Our Lord, however, made me understand how incapable I was of bringing comfort to a soul, and since then I no longer grieved when my visitors went away downcast. I confided to God the sufferings of those so dear to me, and I felt sure that He heard my prayer. At their next visit I learned that I was not mistaken. After this experience, I no longer worry when I have involuntarily given pain. . . . I simply ask Our Lord to make amends."

* * * * *

"What do you think of all the graces that have been heaped upon you?"—"I think '*the Spirit of God breatheth where He will.*'"[1]

* * * * *

"Mother," she said on one occasion, "were I unfaithful, were I to commit even the smallest infidelity, I feel that my soul would be filled with anguish, and I should be unable to welcome death."

When the Prioress showed surprise at hearing her speak in this strain, she continued: "I am speaking of infidelity in the matter of pride. If, for example, I were to say: 'I have acquired such or such a virtue and I can practise it'; or again: 'My God, Thou knowest I love Thee too much to dwell on one single thought

[1] Cf. John iii. 8.

against faith,' I should at once be assailed by the most dangerous temptations and should certainly yield. To prevent this misfortune I have but to say humbly and from my heart: 'My God, I beseech Thee not to let me be unfaithful.'

"I understand clearly how St. Peter fell. He placed too much reliance on his own ardent nature, instead of leaning solely on God. Had he only said: 'Lord, give me strength to follow Thee unto death!' the grace would not have been refused him.

"How is it, Mother, that Our Lord, knowing what was about to happen, did not say to him: 'Ask of Me the courage to be faithful'? I think His purpose was to give us a twofold lesson—first: that He taught His Apostles nothing by His presence which He does not teach us through the inspirations of grace; and secondly: that, having made choice of St. Peter to govern the whole Church, in which there are so many sinners, He wished him to test in himself what man can do without God's help. That is why Jesus said to him before his fall: '*Thou being once converted confirm thy brethren*';[1] in other words, 'Tell them the story of thy sin—show them, by thy own experience, how necessary it is for salvation to rely solely upon Me.'"

* * * * *

Grieved beyond measure at seeing her in such pain, I used often to exclaim: "Life is so dreary!" "Life is not dreary," she would immediately say; "on the contrary, it is most gay. Now if you said: 'Exile is dreary,' I could understand. It is a mistake to call 'life' that which must have an end. Such a word should be only used of the joys of Heaven—joys that are unfading—and in this true meaning life is not sad but gay—most gay. . . ."[2]

[1] Luke xxii. 32.

[2] We read in the *Summarium* of her Cause that she said on one occasion: "I am always gay and content, even when I suffer. It is told of certain Saints that even at recreation they were grave and austere. They attract me less than does Théophane Vénard, who was

She herself had the spirit of cheerfulness in an extraordinary measure. For several days she had been much better, and we said to her: "We do not yet know of what disease you will die. . . ." "But," she answered, "I shall die of *death!* Did not God tell Adam of what he would die when He said to him: '*Thou shalt die of death*'?"[1]

"Then death will come to fetch you?"—"No, not death, but Almighty God. Death is not, as pictures tell us, a phantom, a horrid spectre. The Catechism says that it is the separation of soul and body—nothing more! Well, I do not fear a separation which will unite me for ever to God."

"Will the *Divine Thief*," someone asked, "soon come to steal His little bunch of grapes?" "I see Him in the distance, and I take good care not to cry out: 'Stop thief!' Rather, I call to Him: 'This way, this way!'"

* * * * *

Asked under what name we should pray to her in Heaven, she answered humbly: "Call me *Little Thérèse*."

* * * * *

I told her that beautiful angels, all robed in white, would bear her soul to Heaven. "Fancies like those," she answered, "do not help me, and my soul can only feed upon truth. God and His angels are pure spirits. No human eye can see them as they really are. That is why I have never asked extraordinary favours. I prefer to await the Eternal Vision."

"To console me at your death I have asked God to send me a beautiful dream."—"That is a thing I would

gay everywhere and at all times." Indeed, her extraordinary charity had rendered her so bright and cheerful that when she was not at recreation, the nuns would express their disappointment. "There will be no laughing to-day—Sœur Thérèse is not here." [Ed.]

[1] Cf. Gen. ii. 17. A play on the French: *Tu mourras de mort.* [Ed.]

never do . . . ask for consolations. Since you wish to resemble me, remember what I have written:

> 'Fear not, O Lord, that I shall waken Thee:
> I shall await in peace the heavenly shore.'

"It is so sweet to serve God in the dark night and in the midst of trial. After all, we have but this life in which to live by faith."

* * * * *

"I am happy at the thought of going to Heaven, but when I reflect on these words of Our Lord: '*I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works*,'[1] I think that He will find my case a puzzle: I have no works. . . . Well, He will render unto me *according to His own works!*"

* * * * *

"The chief plenary indulgence, which is within reach of everybody, and can be gained without the ordinary conditions, is that of charity—which '*covereth a multitude of sins*.'"[2]

* * * * *

"Surely you will not even pass through Purgatory. If such a thing should happen, then certainly nobody goes straight to Heaven."—"That does not trouble me. I shall be quite content with God's sentence. Should I go to Purgatory, I shall walk amid the flames—like the three Hebrew children in the furnace—singing the Canticle of Love."

* * * * *

"In Heaven you will be placed among the Seraphim."—"If so, I shall not imitate them. At the sight of God *they cover themselves with their wings*.[3] I shall take good care not to hide myself with mine."

* * * * *

Once, when a picture representing St. Joan of Arc

[1] Apoc. xxii. 12. [2] Prov. x. 12. [3] Cf. Isa. vi. 2.

being comforted in prison by her Voices was shown to her, she remarked: "I also am comforted by an interior voice. From above, the Saints encourage me, saying: 'So long as thou art a captive in chains, thou canst not fulfil thy mission, but after thy death will come thy day of triumph.'"

* * * * *

"God will do all I wish in Heaven, because I have never done my own will on earth."

* * * * *

"You will look down upon us from Heaven, will you not?"—"No, I shall come down."

* * * * *

Some months before the death of Saint Thérèse, the *Life of St. Aloysius* was being read in the refectory, and one of the Mothers was struck by the affection which existed between the young Saint and old Father Corbinelli.

"You are little Aloysius," she said to Thérèse, "and I am Father Corbinelli—remember me when you enter Heaven." "Would you like me to fetch you thither soon, dear Mother?" "No, I have not yet suffered enough." "Nay, Mother, I tell you that you have suffered quite enough." To which Mother Hermance replied, that in so grave a matter she must have the sanction of authority. The request was made to Mother Prioress, who, without attaching much importance to it, gave her sanction.

Now on one of the last days of her life, our Saint, scarcely able to speak owing to her great weakness, received through the infirmarian a bouquet of flowers. It had been gathered by Mother Hermance, who begged for one word of affection. The message came back: "Tell Mother Hermance of the Heart of Jesus that during Mass this morning I saw Father Corbinelli's grave close to that of little Aloysius."

"That is well," replied the good Mother, greatly touched; "tell Sœur Thérèse that I have understood. . . ." She died just one year later, and, according to the prediction of the Little Flower of Jesus, the two graves lay side by side.

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The last words penned by the hand of Saint Thérèse were: "O Mary, were I Queen of Heaven, and wert thou Thérèse, I should wish to be Thérèse, that I might see thee Queen of Heaven!"

LETTERS OF SAINT THÉRÈSE THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

LETTERS OF SAINT THÉRÈSE TO HER SISTER CÉLINE

I

J.M.J.T.

May 8, 1888.

DEAREST CÉLINE,[1]—There are moments when I wonder whether I am really and truly in Carmel; sometimes I can scarcely believe it. What have I done for God, that He should shower so many graces upon me?

A whole month has passed since we parted from each other, though even if the wide ocean were between us, our souls would be inseparable. I know that not to have me with you is real suffering, and if I listened to myself I should ask Jesus to let me bear the sadness in your stead! But I do not listen, as you see; I should be afraid of being selfish in wishing for myself the better part—I mean the suffering. You are right—life is often burdensome and bitter. It is hard to begin a day of toil, especially when Jesus hides Himself from our love. What is this sweet Friend about? If He sees our anguish and the burden weighing us down, why does He not come and comfort us?

Have no fear, dear sister, He is by our side, watching us and begging these tears. He needs them for our souls and the souls of others, and He longs to give us a magnificent reward. I assure you that it costs Him dear to fill us with bitterness, but He knows it is the only means of preparing us to know Him as He knows Himself, and *to become ourselves as gods!* Our soul is indeed great and our destiny glorious. Let us lift ourselves above all things that pass, and keep ourselves aloof from this earth! Up above, the air is so pure . . . Jesus may hide Himself, but we know that He is there.

1 These letters were writtten prior to Céline's entry into the Carmel of Lisieux, 1894. Céline's name in religion is Sœur Geneviève of the Holy Face. [ED.]

II

October 20, 1888.

My dearest Sister,—Do not let your weakness make you unhappy. When, in the morning, we feel no courage or strength for the practice of virtue, it is really a grace: it is the time to "*lay the axe to the root of the tree*,"[1] relying upon Jesus alone. If we fall, an act of love will set all right, and Jesus smiles. He helps us without seeming to do so; and the tears which sinners cause Him to shed are wiped away by our feeble love. Love can do all things. The most impossible tasks seem to it easy and sweet. You know well that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, or even at their difficulty, as at the love with which we do them. What, then, have we to fear?

You wish to become a Saint, and you ask me if this is not attempting too much. Dear Céline, I will not tell you to aim at the seraphic holiness of the most privileged souls, but rather to be "*perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*"[2] You see that your dream—that our dreams and our desires—are not fancies, since Jesus Himself has commanded us to realise them.

III

January, 1889.

My dear little Céline,—Jesus offers you the cross,[3] a very heavy cross, and you are afraid of not being able to carry it without giving way. Why? Our Beloved Himself fell three times on the way to Calvary, and why should we not imitate our Spouse? What a favour from Jesus, and how He must love us to send us so great a sorrow! Eternity itself will not be long enough to bless Him for it. He heaps his favours upon us as upon the greatest Saints. What can be His loving designs for our souls? That is a secret which will only be revealed to us in our heavenly home, on the day when "*the Lord shall wipe away all our tears.*"[4]

Now we have nothing more to hope for on earth—"the cool evenings are passed"[5]—for us suffering alone remains! Ours is an enviable lot, and the Seraphim in Heaven are jealous of our happiness.

[1] Matt. iii. 10.
[2] Matt. v. 48.
[3] In this and the subsequent letters allusion is made to the affliction which befell their father.
[4] Apoc. xxi. 4.
[5] St. John of the Cross.

The other day I came across this striking passage: "It is not the same thing to be resigned and to be united to the Will of God; there is the same difference between them as that which exists between union and unity; in union there are still two, in unity there is but one."[1] Yes, let us be one with God even in this life; and in order to be so, we should be more than resigned, we should embrace the cross with joy.

IV

February 28, 1889.

MY DEAR LITTLE SISTER,—Jesus is "*a Spouse of blood.*"[2] He wishes for Himself all the blood of our hearts. You are right—it costs us dear to give Him what He asks. But what a joy that it does cost! It is happiness to bear our crosses and to feel our weakness in doing so.

Far from complaining to Our Lord of the cross He sends us, dear Céline, I cannot fathom the infinite love which has led Him to treat us in this way. Our dear father must indeed be loved by God to have so much suffering given to him. It is a delight for us to be humbled with him. I know that by humiliation alone can saints be made, and I also know that our trial is a mine of gold for us to turn to account. I am but a little grain of sand, yet I wish to set to work, though I have neither courage nor strength. Nay, my very weakness will make my task easier, for I wish to work for love. Our martyrdom is beginning. . . . Let us go forth to suffer together, dear sister, and let us offer our sufferings to Jesus for the salvation of souls.

V

March 12, 1889.

. . . I must forget this world. Here everything wearies me —I find only one joy, that of suffering, and this joy, which is not a pleasure of the senses, is above all joy. Life is passing, and eternity is drawing near. Soon we shall live the very life of God. After we have been filled at the source of all bitterness, our thirst will be quenched at the very fountain of all sweetness.

"*The fashion of this world passeth away*"[3]—soon we shall see new skies—a more radiant sun will light with its splendour crystal seas and infinite horizons. We shall no longer be prisoners in a land of exile; all will have passed away, and with our heavenly Spouse we shall sail upon a shoreless ocean. Now,

[1] Mme. Swetchine. [2] Cf. Exod. iv. 25. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 31.

"*our harps are hanging on the willows which grow by the rivers of Babylon*,"[1] but in the day of our deliverance what harmonies will they not give forth, and how joyfully will all their strings vibrate! Now, "*we shed tears as we remember Sion, for how can we sing the songs of the Lord in a land of exile?*"[2] The burden of our song is suffering, for Jesus offers us a chalice of great bitterness. Let us not withdraw our lips from it, but suffer in peace. He who says *peace* does not say *joy*, at least not a joy that can be felt: to suffer in peace it is enough to will heartily all that Our Lord wills. Do not think we can find love without suffering, for our nature remains and must be taken into account; but suffering puts great treasures within our reach. Indeed it is our very livelihood, and so precious that Jesus came down upon earth on purpose to possess it. Of course, we should like to suffer generously and nobly; we should like never to fall. What an illusion! What does it matter if I fall at every moment! In that way I realise my weakness, and the gain is considerable. My God, Thou seest how little I am good for, away from Thy divine arms; and if Thou leavest me alone, well, it is because it pleases Thee to see me lie on the ground. Then why should I be troubled?

If you are willing to bear in peace the trial of not being pleased with yourself, you will be offering the Divine Master a home in your heart. It is true that you will suffer, because you will be like a stranger to your own house; but do not be afraid—the poorer you are, the more Jesus will love you. I know that He is better pleased to see you stumbling in the night upon a stony road, than walking in the full light of day upon a path carpeted with flowers, because these flowers might delay your advance.

VI

July 14, 1889.

My darling Sister,—I am ever with you in spirit. It is indeed hard to live upon earth, but to-morrow, nay, in an hour we shall be at rest. O my God, what shall we then see? What is this life which will have no end? Our Lord will be the soul of our soul. O unfathomable mystery! "*Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*"[3] And all this will come to pass soon—very soon—if we love Jesus with

[1] Cf. Ps. cxxxvi. 2.
[2] Cf. Ps. cxxxvi. 1, 4.
[3] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

our whole heart. It seems to me that God has no need of years to perfect His labour of love in a soul. One ray from His heart can in an instant make His flower blossom forth, never to fade. . . . Céline, during the fleeting moments that remain to us, let us save souls! I feel that our Spouse asks us for souls—above all, for the souls of priests. . . . It is He who bids me tell you this.

There is but one thing to be done here below: to love Jesus, and to save souls for Him that He may be more loved. We must not let slip the smallest opportunity of giving Him joy. We must refuse Him nothing. He is in such need of love.

We are His chosen lilies, and He dwells as a king in our midst. He lets us share the honours of His royalty—His divine blood bedews our petals—and His thorns as they wound us spread abroad the perfume of our love.

VII

October 22, 1889.

My dearest Céline,—I send you a picture of the Holy Face. The contemplation of this adorable countenance seems to belong in a special way to my little sister, truly the sister of my soul. May she be another Veronica, and wipe away all the blood and tears of Jesus, her only Love! May she give Him souls! May she force her way through the soldiers—that is, the world—to come close to His side. . . . Happy will she be when she sees in Heaven the value of that mysterious draught with which she quenched the thirst of her heavenly Spouse; when she sees His lips, once parched with burning thirst, speaking to her the one eternal word—love, and the thanks which shall have no end. . . .

Good-bye, dear little Veronica;[1] to-morrow, no doubt, your Beloved will ask some new sacrifice, some fresh relief for His thirst . . . but "*let us go and die with Him!*"

[1] It is remarkable that Saint Thérèse applied this name to her sister Céline—in Carmel, Sœur Geneviève of the Holy Face—who, under her inspiration, was later to reproduce so faithfully the true likeness of Our Lord, from the Holy Winding Sheet of Turin.

It is also a coincidence that soon after the death of Saint Thérèse the mystery of this precious relic was explained. Till it was solemnly exposed in 1898, no one had seen the Holy Winding Sheet for thirty years. Photography revealed the fact that the mysterious imprint of the Body of Jesus, which had hitherto puzzled even experts, is in reality a "negative." The "positive" obtained from it shows the majestic figure of Christ, but the outlines are somewhat blurred and indistinct. To produce a picture which would appeal to the devotion of the faithful, it was necessary to retrace the figure with the greatest

VIII

July 18, 1890.

My dear little Sister,—I send you a passage from Isaias which will comfort you. Long ago the Prophet's soul was filled, as our souls are now, with the thought of the hidden beauties of the Divine Face. Many a century has passed since then. It makes me wonder what is *time*. Time is but a mirage, a dream. Already God sees us in glory, and rejoices in our everlasting bliss. How much good I derive from this thought! I understand now why He allows us to suffer.

Since Our Beloved has "*trodden the wine-press alone*,"[1] the wine-press from which He gives us to drink—we at least must not refuse to be clothed in blood-stained garments, or to tread out for Jesus a new wine which may quench His thirst! When "*He looks around Him*," He will not be able to say now that "*He is alone*"[2]—we shall be there to help Him.

"*His look as it were hidden.*"[3] Alas! it is so even to this day, and no one understands His tears. "*Open to Me, My sister, My spouse*," he says to us, "*for My head is full of dew and My locks of the drops of the night.*"[4] Thus Jesus complains to our souls when He is deserted and forgotten. . . . *To be forgotten.* It is this, I think, which gives Him most pain.

And our dear father!—it is heartrending, but how can we repine since Our Lord Himself was looked upon "*as one struck by God and afflicted*"?[5] In this great sorrow we should forget ourselves, and pray for priests—our lives must be entirely devoted to them. Our Divine Master makes me feel more and more that this is what He asks of you and me.

care and precision. Céline devoted six months to the task, and succeeded in making an admirable and touching copy of the photograph.

Pius X attached numerous indulgences to this representation of the Holy Face, and expressed his desire that "it should find a place in every Catholic household." At the same time he granted an indulgence of 300 days, *toties quoties*, for the recitation of a prayer to the Holy Face composed by the Saint, and reproduced in this volume.

If the authenticity of the Holy Winding Sheet of Turin be accepted, then this picture of the Holy Face is without doubt an exact likeness of Our Blessed Lord. With regard to the authenticity and to the explanation of the figure on the shroud being a negative, the reader is referred to two able articles which appeared in the *Tablet* of April 1 and April 8, 1911, pp. 482 and 522.

Copies of the picture can be obtained at the Carmel of Lisieux, or from Burns Oates and Washbourne, London, England. [Ed.]

[1] Isa. lxiii. 3. [2] Cf. Isa. lxiii. 5.
[3] Isa. liii. 3. [4] Cant. v. 2.
[5] Isa. liii. 4.

IX

September 23, 1890.

Oh, Céline, what a wound I have received! And yet I feel it is inflicted by a loving hand, by a hand divinely jealous.

All was ready for my espousals;[1] but do you not think that something was still wanting to the feast? It is true, Jesus had already enriched me with many jewels, but no doubt there was one of incomparable beauty still missing; this priceless diamond He has given me to-day . . . Papa will not be here to-morrow! Céline, I confess that I have cried bitterly. . . . I am still crying, and I can scarcely hold my pen.

You know how intensely I longed to see our dearest father again; but now I feel that it is God's will that he should not be at my feast. God has allowed it simply to try our love. Jesus wishes me to be an orphan . . . to be alone, with Him alone, so that He may unite Himself more closely to me. And He wishes to give me back in Heaven the joy so lawfully desired, which He has denied me here on earth.

To-day's trial is one of those sorrows that are difficult to understand: a joy was set before us, one most natural and easy of attainment. We stretched forth our hands . . . and the coveted joy was withdrawn. But it is not the hand of man which has done this thing—it is God's work. Try to understand your Thérèse, and let us accept cheerfully the cross which is offered us. To-morrow's feast will be one of tears, but I feel that Jesus will be greatly consoled. . . .

X

October 14, 1890.

My darling Sister,—I know quite well all you are suffering. I know your anguish, and I share it. Oh! if I could but impart to you the peace which Jesus has put into my soul amid my most bitter tears. Be comforted—all things pass away. Our life of yesterday is spent—death too will come and go. Then we shall rejoice in life, true life, for countless ages, for evermore. Meanwhile let us make of our hearts a garden of delights where our sweet Saviour may come and take His rest. Let us plant only lilies there, and sing with St. John of the Cross:

[1] She was professed on September 8, 1890, and received the veil on September 24.

"There I remained in deep oblivion,
My head reposing upon Him I love,
Lost to myself and all beside!
I cast my cares away
And let them, heedless, mid the lilies lie."[1]

XI

April 26, 1891.

My dear little Sister,—Three years ago our hearts had not yet been bruised, and life was one glad smile. Then Jesus looked down upon us, and all things were changed into an ocean of tears . . . but likewise into an ocean of grace and of love. God has taken from us him whom we loved so tenderly—was it not that we might be able to say more truly than ever: "*Our Father who art in Heaven*"? How consoling is this divine word, and what vast horizons it opens before us!

My darling Céline, you who asked me so many questions when we were little, I wonder how it was you never asked: "Why has God not made me an angel?" Well, I shall tell you. Our Lord wishes to have His court here on earth, as He has in Heaven. He wishes for angel-martyrs and angel-apostles; and if He has not made you an angel in Heaven, it is because He wishes you to be an angel on earth, so that you may be able to suffer for His love.

Dearest sister, the shadows will soon disappear, the rays of the Eternal Sun will thaw the hoar frost of winter. . . . A little longer, and we shall be in our true country, and our childhood's joys—those Sunday evenings, those outpourings of the heart—will be given back to us for ever!

XII

August 15, 1892.

My dear little Sister,—To write to you to-day I am obliged to steal a little time from Our Lord. He will forgive, because it is of Him that we are going to speak together. The solitude and the picturesque landscapes which spread themselves before you ought to uplift your soul. I do not see those things, and I content myself by saying with St. John of the Cross in his Spiritual Canticle:

"In Christ I have the mountains,
The quiet, wooded valleys."

[1] St. John of the Cross: *The Night of the Soul*, 8th stanza.

Lately I have been thinking what I could undertake for the salvation of souls, and these simple words of the Gospel have given me light. Pointing to the fields of ripe corn, Jesus once said to His disciples: "*Lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already to the harvest*";[1] and again: "*The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers.*"[2]

Here is a mystery indeed! Is not Jesus all-powerful? Do not creatures belong to Him who made them? Why does He deign to say: "*Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers*"? It is because the delicacy of His love for us surpasses all understanding, that He wishes us to share in all He does. The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of a poor little soul to save a multitude of other souls, ransomed, like her, at the price of His blood.

Our vocation is not to go forth and reap in Our Father's fields. Jesus does not say to us: "*Look down and reap the harvest.*" Our mission is even more sublime. "*Lift up your eyes and see*," He tells us, "see how in Heaven there are empty thrones. It is for you to fill them. . . . You are as Moses praying on the mountain, so ask Me for labourers and they shall be sent. I only await a prayer, a sigh!"

Is not the apostleship of prayer—so to speak—higher than that of the spoken word? It is for us by prayer to train workers who will spread the glad tidings of the Gospel and who will save countless souls—the souls to whom we shall be the spiritual mothers. What, then, have we to envy in the priests of the Lord?

XIII

My darling Sister,—The affection of our childhood days has changed into a closest union of mind and heart. Jesus has drawn us to Him together, for are you not already His? He has put the world beneath our feet. Like Zaccheus we have climbed into a tree to behold Him—the lofty, mysterious tree from whence we can say: "All is mine, all is for me: the earth and the heavens are mine, God Himself is mine, and the Mother of my God is for me."[3]

Speaking of that Blessed Mother, I must tell you of one of my simple ways. Sometimes I find myself saying to her: "Dearest Mother, it seems to me that I am happier than you.

[1] John iv. 35. [2] Matt. ix. 37, 38.
[3] St. John of the Cross.

I have you for my Mother, and you have no Blessed Virgin to love. . . . It is true, you are the Mother of Jesus, but you have given Him to me, and He, from the Cross, has given you to be our Mother—thus we are richer than you! Long ago, in your humility, you wished to become the little handmaid of the Mother of God; and I—poor little creature—am not your handmaid, but your child! You are the Mother of Jesus, and you are also *mine!*"

Dear Céline, that same Jesus has unveiled for us many a mystery by making us climb the mystical tree of which I spoke above. But what new science is He going to teach us now? Have we not learned all His secrets?

"*Make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house.*"[1] Jesus bids us come down. Where, then, must we go? The Jews asked Him: "*Master, where dwellest Thou?*"[2] And He answered: "*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.*"[3] If we are to be the dwelling-place of Jesus, we must come down even to this—we must be so poor that we have not where to lay our heads.

Our Lord desires that we should receive Him into our hearts, and no doubt they are empty of creatures. But, alas! mine is not empty of self; that is why He bids me come down. And I shall come down even to the very ground, that Jesus may find within my heart a resting-place for His divine head, and may feel that there at least He is loved and understood.

XIV

April 25, 1893.

My little Céline,—I must come and disclose the desires of Jesus with regard to your soul. Remember that He did not say: "I am the Flower of the gardens, a carefully-tended rose"; but, "*I am the Flower of the fields and the Lily of the valleys.*"[4] Well, you must be always as a drop of dew hidden in the heart of this beautiful Lily.

The dewdrop—what could be simpler, what more pure? It is not the child of the clouds; it is born beneath the starry sky, and survives but a night. When the sun darts forth its ardent rays, the delicate pearls adorning each blade of grass quickly pass into the lightest of vapour. . . . There is the portrait of my little Céline! She is a drop of dew, an offspring of Heaven—her true home. Through the night of this

[1] Luke xix. 5.
[2] John i. 38.
[3] Luke ix. 58.
[4] Cant. ii. 1.

life she must hide herself in the *Field-flower's* golden cup; no eye must discover her abode.

Happy dewdrop, known to God alone, pay no heed to the roaring torrents of the world! Do not envy the crystal stream which winds among the meadows. The ripple of its waters may be most sweet, but it can be heard by creatures. Besides, the Field-flower could never contain it in its cup. One must be so lowly to draw near to Jesus, and few are the souls that aspire to be lowly and unknown. "Are not the river and the brook," they urge, "of more use than a dewdrop? Of what avail is it? Its only purpose is to refresh for one moment some poor little field-flower."

Ah! they little know the true *Flower of the field*. Did they know Him they would understand better Our Lord's reproach to Martha. Our Beloved needs neither our brilliant deeds nor our beautiful thoughts. Were He in search of lofty ideas, has He not His angels, whose knowledge infinitely surpasses that of the greatest genius on earth? Neither intellect nor other talents has He come to seek among us. . . . He has become the *Flower of the field* to show how much He loves simplicity.

The *Lily of the valley* asks but a single dewdrop, which for one night will rest in its cup, hidden from all human eyes. But when the shadows begin to fade, when the *Flower of the field* becomes the *Sun of Justice*,[1] then the dewdrop—the humble sharer of His exile—will rise up to Him as love's vapour. He will shed on her a ray of His light, and before the whole court of Heaven she will shine eternally like a precious pearl, a dazzling mirror of the Divine Sun.

XV

August 2, 1893.

My dear Céline,—What you write fills me with joy; you are making your way by a royal road. The Spouse in the Canticles, unable to find her Beloved in the time of repose, went forth to seek Him in the city. But in vain . . . it was only without the walls she found Him It is not in the sweetness of repose that Jesus would have us discover His adorable presence. He shrouds Himself in darkness. True, this was not His way with the multitude, for we read that all the people were carried away as soon as He spoke to them.[2]

The weaker souls He charmed by His divine eloquence with

[1] Mal. iv. 2.

[2] Luke xix. 48.

the aim of strengthening them against the day of temptation and trial, but His faithful friends were few that day when "*He was silent*"[1] in the presence of His judges. What a sweet melody to my heart is that silence of the Divine Master!

He would have us give Him alms as to a poor man, and puts Himself—so to speak—at our mercy. He will take nothing that is not cheerfully given, and the veriest trifle is precious in His divine eyes. He stretches forth His hand to receive our slender gift of love, so that in the glorious day of judgement we may hear those ineffable words: "*Come, ye blessed of My Father, for I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, thirsty and you gave Me to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, sick and you visited Me, in prison and you came to Me.*"[2]

Dearest Céline, let us rejoice in the lot that is ours! Let us give and give again, and give royally, never forgetting that our Beloved is a hidden treasure which few souls know how to find. Now to discover what is hidden we must needs enter into the hiding-place. Let our life, then, be one of concealment. The author of the *Imitation* tells us:

"If thou wouldst know and learn something to the purpose, love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing . . .[3] Having forsaken all things, a man should forsake himself. . .[4] Let one man glory in this and another in that, but thou for thy part rejoice neither in this nor in that, but in contempt of thyself."[5]

XVI

My dear Céline,—I am glad that my letters are of some help, but I am under no misapprehension: "*Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it.*"[6] The greatest eloquence cannot call forth a single act of love unless grace touches the heart.

Consider the peach with its delicate rosy tint, with its flavour of nectar beyond the skill of man to invent. Is it for the peach's own sake that God created that colour so fair to the eye, that velvety covering so soft to the touch? Is it for itself that He made it so sweet? Nay, it is for us; the only thing that is all its own and is essential to its being is the stone: it possesses nothing beyond.

Thus also it pleases Jesus to lavish His gifts on certain souls in order to draw yet others to Himself. In His mercy He

[1] Matt. xxvi. 63.
[2] Cf. Matt. xxv. 34-36.
[3] *Imit.* I., ch. ii. 3.
[4] *Ib.* II., ch. xi. 4.
[5] *Ib.* III., ch. xlix. 7.
[6] Ps. cxxvi. 1.

humbles them inwardly, and gently compels them to recognise their nothingness and His almighty power. Now this sentiment of humility is like a kernel of grace which God hastens to develop against the blessed day, when, clothed with an imperishable beauty, they will be placed, without danger, on the banqueting-table of Paradise. Dear little sister, sweet echo of my soul, Thérèse is far from the heights of fervour. But when I am in this state of spiritual dryness, unable to pray, or to practise virtue, I look for little opportunities, for the smallest trifles, to give pleasure to Jesus: a smile or a kind word, for instance, when I would wish to be silent, or to show that I am bored. If no such occasion offer, I try at least to say over and over again that I love Him. This is not hard, and it keeps alive the fire in my heart. Even should the fire of love seem dead, I would still throw my tiny straws on the ashes, and I am confident it would light up again.

It is true I am not always faithful, but I never lose courage. I leave myself in the arms of Our Lord. He teaches me "to draw profit from everything, from the good and from the bad which He finds in me."[1] He teaches me to speculate in the bank of love, or rather it is He who speculates for me, without telling me how He does it—that is His affair, not mine. I have but to surrender myself wholly to Him, to do so without reserve, without even the satisfaction of knowing what it is all bringing to me. . . . For I am not the prodigal child, and Jesus need not trouble about a feast for me—*I am always with Him.*[2]

It is most touching to read in the Gospel how the Good Shepherd leaves the faithful ones of His flock in the desert to hasten after the lost sheep. He is sure of them. But how could they stray away, since they are prisoners of Love? In like manner does the beloved Shepherd of our souls deprive us of the sweets of His presence, to give His consolations to sinners; or if He lead us to Mount Thabor it is but for one brief moment . . . the pasture land is nearly always in the valleys, "*it is there that He takes His rest at midday.*"[3]

XVII

October 20, 1893.

My dear Sister,—I find in the Canticle of Canticles this passage which may be fitly applied to you: "*What dost thou see in thy beloved but a band of musicians in an armed camp?*"[4]

1 St. John of the Cross.
2 Cf. Luke xv. 31.
3 Cant. i. 6.
4 Cf. Cant. vii. 1.

Through suffering, your life has in truth become a battlefield, and as there must be a band of musicians, you will be the little harp of Jesus. But no concert is complete without singing, and if Jesus plays, must not Céline make melody with her voice? When the music is plaintive, she will sing the songs of exile; and when it is gay, she will echo the music of Paradise. . . .

Whatever may happen, all earthly events, be they joyous or sad, will be but distant sounds, unable to awake a vibration from the harp of Jesus. He reserves to Himself alone the right of lightly touching its strings.

I cannot think without delight of that sweet saint, Cecilia. What an example she gives us! In the midst of a pagan world, in the very heart of danger, at the moment when she was to be united to a man whose love was so utterly of earth, it seems to me as if she should have wept and trembled with fear. But instead, "during the music of the marriage-feast Cecilia kept singing in her heart."[1] What perfect resignation! No doubt she heard other melodies than those of earth; her Divine Spouse, too, was singing, and the angels repeated in chorus the refrain of Bethlehem's blessed night: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill.*"[2]

The glory of God! St. Cecilia understood it well, and longed for it with all her heart. She guessed that her Jesus was thirsting for souls . . . and that is why her whole desire was to bring to Him quickly the soul of the young Roman, whose only thought was of human glory. This wise virgin will make of him a martyr, and multitudes will follow in his footsteps. She knows no fear: the angels in their song made promise of peace. She knows that the Prince of Peace is bound to protect her, to guard her virginity, and to make her recompense. . . . "*Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation!*"[3]

Dearest sister, I hardly know what I write; I let my pen follow the dictates of my heart. You tell me you feel your weakness, but that is a grace. It is Our Lord who sows the seeds of self-distrust in your soul. Have no fear! If you do not fail to give Him pleasure in small things, He will be obliged to help you in great ones.

The Apostles laboured long without Him, they toiled a whole night and caught no fish. Their labours were not unacceptable to Him, but He wished to prove that He is the giver of all

[1] Office of St. Cecilia. [2] Luke ii. 14.
[3] Wisdom iv. 1.

things. First, however, He asked of them an act of humility: "*Children, have you anything to eat?*"[1] St. Peter, avowing his helplessness, cried out: "*Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing.*"[2] The Heart of Jesus was deeply touched. . . . Had the Apostle caught some small fish, perhaps our Divine Master would not have worked a miracle; but he had caught *nothing*, and so through the power and goodness of God his nets were soon filled with great fishes. Such is Our Lord's way. He gives as God, with divine generosity, but He insists on humility of heart.

XVIII

July 7, 1894.

My dear little Sister,—I do not know if you are still in the same frame of mind as when you last wrote to me; I presume that you are, and I answer with this passage of the Canticle of Canticles, which explains so well the state of a soul in utter dryness, a soul which cannot find joy or consolation in anything: "*I went down into the garden of nut-trees to see the fruits of the valleys, and to look if the vineyard had flourished, and the pomegranates were in bud. I no longer knew where I was: my soul was troubled because of the chariots of Aminadab.*"[3]

There is the true picture of our souls. Often we go down into the fertile valleys where our heart loves to find its nourishment; and the vast fields of Holy Scripture, which have so often opened to yield us richest treasures, now seem but an arid and waterless waste. We no longer even know where we stand. In place of peace and light, all is sorrow and darkness. But, like the Spouse in the Canticles, we know the cause of this trial: "*My soul was troubled because of the chariots of Aminadab.*"

We are not as yet in our true country, and as gold is tried in the fire so must our souls be purified by temptation. We sometimes think we are abandoned. Alas! the chariots—that is to say, the idle clamours which beset and disturb us—are they within the soul or without? We cannot tell, but Jesus knows; He sees all our grief, and in the night, on a sudden, His voice is heard: "*Return, return, O Sulamitess: return, return, that we may behold thee.*"[4]

[1] John xxi. 5.
[2] Luke v. 5. Saint Thérèse joins in one the two miraculous draughts of fishes. [Ed.]
[3] Cf. Cant. vi. 10, 11.
[4] Cant. vi. 12.

O gracious call! We dared no longer even look upon ourselves, the sight filled us with horror, yet Jesus calls us that He may look upon us at leisure. He wills to see us; He comes, and with Him come the other two Persons of the Adorable Trinity to take possession of our soul.

Our Lord promised this, when, with unspeakable tenderness, He said of old: "*If anyone love Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*"[1] To keep the word of Jesus, then, is the one condition of our happiness, the proof of our love for Him; and this word seems to me to be His very Self, for He calls Himself the uncreated *Word* of the Father.

In the same Gospel of St. John He makes the sublime prayer: "*Sanctify them in truth, Thy word is truth.*"[2] And in another passage Jesus teaches us that He is "*the Way and the Truth and the Life.*"[3] We know, then, what is this word which must be kept; we cannot say, like Pilate: "*What is truth?*"[4] We possess the truth, for our Beloved dwells in our hearts.

Often *this Beloved is to us a bundle of myrrh.*[5] We share the chalice of His sufferings; but how sweet it will be to us one day to hear the gentle words: "*You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations, and I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom.*"[6]

XIX

August 19, 1894.

This is perhaps the last time that I need have recourse to writing in order to talk to you, my dear little sister. God in His goodness has granted my dearest wish. Come, and we shall suffer together. . . . Then Jesus will take one of us, and the others will remain in exile yet a little longer. Now, listen well to what I am going to say. God will never separate us; and if I die before you, do not think that I shall be far away—never shall we have been more closely united. You must not be grieved at my childish prophecy. I am not ill, I have an iron constitution; but the Lord can break iron as if it were clay.

Our dear father makes his presence felt in a way which touches me deeply. After a living death of five long years,

[1] John xiv. 23. [2] John xvii. 17. [3] John xiv. 6.
[4] John xviii. 38. [5] Cf. Cant. i. 12. [6] Luke xxii. 28, 29.

what joy to find him as he used to be, nay, more a father than ever. How well he is going to repay you for the care you so generously bestowed on him! You were his angel, now he will be yours. He has only been one month in Heaven, and already, through the power of his intercession, all your plans are succeeding. It is easy for him now to arrange matters for us, and he has had less to suffer on Céline's account than he had for his poor little Queen.

For a long time you have been asking me for news about the noviciate, especially about my duties, and I am going to satisfy you. In my dealings with the novices I am like a setter on the scent of game. The task gives me much anxiety because it is so exacting. All day long, from morn till night, I am in pursuit of game. Mother Prioress and the Novice Mistress play the part of sportsmen—but sportsmen are too big to be creeping through the cover, whereas a little dog can push its way in anywhere . . . and then its scent is so keen! I keep a close watch upon my little rabbits; I do not want to hurt them, but I tell them gently: "You must keep your fur glossy, and must not look foolishly about as does the rabbit of the warren." In fact, I try to make them such as the Hunter of Souls would have them, simple little creatures that go on browsing heedless of everything else.

I smile as I write, but in all seriousness I am convinced that one of these rabbits—you know which one I mean—is worth a hundred times more than the setter; it has run through many a danger, and I own that, had I been in its place, I should have long since been lost for ever in the great forest of the world.

XX

September, 1894.

Dearest Céline,—I am so glad that you do not feel any particular attraction at the thought of entering Carmel. This is really a mark of Our Lord's favour, and shows that He looks for a gift from your hands. He knows that it is so much sweeter to give than to receive. What happiness to suffer for Him who loves us even unto folly, and to pass for fools in the eyes of the world! Men judge others by themselves, and, as the world will not hearken to reason, it calls us unreasonable too.

We may console ourselves that we are not the first. Folly was the only crime with which Herod could reproach Our Lord . . . and, after all, Herod was right. It was folly indeed, for the King of Glory, who sitteth above the Cherubim,

to seek out thrones for Himself in poor human hearts. Was He not supremely happy in the company of His Father and the Holy Spirit of Love? Why, then, come down on earth in search of sinners to make of them His closest friends? Nay, our folly could never exceed the foolishness of Christ, and our deeds are quite within the bounds of reason by the side of His. The world may leave us alone. I repeat, it is the world that is *insane*, because it will not heed what Jesus has done and suffered to save it from eternal damnation.

We are neither idlers nor spendthrifts. Our Divine Master has taken our defence upon Himself. Remember the scene in the house of Lazarus: Martha was serving, while Mary had no thought of food, but only of how she could please her Beloved. And "*she broke her alabaster box, and poured out upon her Saviour's head the precious spikenard,*[1] *and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*"[2]

The Apostles murmured against Magdalen, and so do men murmur against us. Even fervent Catholics think our ways are exaggerated, and that we ought to wait upon Jesus like Martha, instead of pouring out on Him the odorous ointment of our lives. Yet what does it matter if the ointment-jars be broken, since Our Lord is consoled, and the world in spite of itself is forced to inhale the perfumes they give forth? It has much need of these same perfumes to purify the unwholesome air it breathes.

Good-bye, dearest sister, for a while only. Your barque is nearing port. The breezes filling its sails are the zephyrs of love—breezes that speed more swiftly than the lightning-flash. Good-bye! in a few days we shall be together within these Carmel walls . . . and afterwards together in Paradise. Did not Jesus say during His Passion: "*Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming in the clouds of Heaven*"?[3] . . . We shall be there!

THÉRÈSE.

[1] Cf. Mark xiv. 3. [2] John xii. 3. [3] Matt. xxvi. 64.

LETTERS TO MOTHER AGNES OF JESUS

Selections

I

(*Written in* 1887, *shortly before Thérèse entered the Carmel.*)

My darling little Mother,—You are right when you tell me that every cup must contain its drop of gall. I find that trials are a great help towards detachment from the things of earth: they make us look higher than this world. Nothing here can satisfy, and we can find rest only in holding ourselves ready to do God's will.

My frail barque has great difficulty in reaching port. I sighted it long since, and still I find myself afar off. Yet Jesus steers the little barque, and I am sure that on His appointed day it will come safely to the blessed haven of Carmel. O Pauline! when Jesus vouchsafes me this grace, I wish to give myself entirely to Him, to suffer always for Him, to live for Him alone. I do not fear His rod, for even when the smart is keenest we feel that it is His sweet hand which strikes.

It is such joy to think that for each pain cheerfully borne we shall love God more for ever. Happy should I be if at the hour of my death I could offer Jesus a single soul. There would be one soul less in hell, and one more to bless God for all eternity.

II

(*Written during her retreat before receiving the habit.*)

January, 1889.

Dryness and drowsiness—such is the state of my soul in its intercourse with Jesus! But since my Beloved wishes to sleep, I shall not prevent Him. I am only too happy that He does not treat me as a stranger, but rather in a homely way. He riddles His "little ball" with pin-pricks that hurt indeed, though when they come from the hand of this loving Friend, the pain is all sweetness, so gentle is His touch. How different the hand of man!

Yet I am happy—most happy—to suffer. If Jesus Himself does not pierce the ball, He guides the hand which does. Mother! if you knew how utterly indifferent to earthly things I desire to be, and of how little concern to me are all the beauties of creation! I should be wretched if I possessed them. My heart seems so vast when I think of the goods of earth—all of them together unable to fill it. But by the side of Jesus it looks so small. How kind He is, this God who will soon be my Spouse. He is divinely lovable for not permitting me to be the captive of any passing joy. He knows well that if He sent me but a shadow of earthly happiness I should cling to it with all the intense ardour of my heart, and so He refuses even this shadow . . . He prefers to leave me in darkness, rather than afford me a false glimmer which would not be Himself.

I do not wish creatures to have one atom of my love. I wish to give all to Jesus, since He makes me understand that He alone is perfect happiness. All!—all shall be for Him! And even when I have nothing, as is the case to-night, I will give Him this nothing. . . .

III

1889.

. . . . . .

I have a longing for those heart-wounds, those pin-pricks which inflict so much pain. I know of no ecstasy to which I do not prefer sacrifice. There I find happiness, and there alone. The slender reed has no fear of being broken, for it is planted beside the waters of Love. When, therefore, it bends before the gale, it gathers strength in the refreshing stream, and longs for yet another storm to pass and sway its head. My very weakness makes me strong. No harm can come to me, since in whatever happens I see only the tender hand of Jesus. . . . Besides, no suffering is too big a price to pay for the glorious palm.

IV

(*Written during her retreat before profession.*)

September, 1890.

My dearest Mother,—Your little hermit must give you an account of her journey. Before starting, my Beloved asked me in what land I wished to travel, and what road I wished to take. I told Him that I had only one desire, that of reaching the summit of the *Mountain of Love*.

Thereupon, roads innumerable spread before my gaze, but so many of these were perfect that I felt incapable of choosing any of my own free will. Then I said to my divine Guide: "Thou knowest whither I would go . . . and for whose sake I would climb the Mountain. Thou knowest who possesses the love of my heart. For Him alone I set out on the journey; lead me therefore by the paths of His choosing: my joy shall be full if only He is pleased."

And Our Lord took me by the hand, and led me through an underground passage where it is neither hot nor cold, where the sun does not shine, and where neither wind nor rain can enter—a place where I see nothing but a half-veiled light, the light that gleams from the downcast eyes of the Face of Jesus.

My Spouse speaks not a word, and I say nothing save that I love Him more than myself; and in the depths of my heart I know this is true, for I am more His than mine. I cannot see that we are advancing towards our journey's goal, since we travel underground; and yet, without knowing how, it seems to me that we are nearing the summit of the Mountain.

I give thanks to Jesus for making me walk in darkness, and in the darkness I enjoy profound peace. Indeed, I consent to remain through all my religious life in the gloomy passage into which He has led me. I desire only that my darkness may obtain light for sinners. I am content, nay, full of joy, to be without all consolation. I should be ashamed if my love were like that of earthly brides who are ever looking for gifts from their bridegrooms, or seeking to catch the smile which fills them with delight.

Thérèse, the little Spouse of Jesus, loves Him for Himself; she looks on the Face of her Beloved only to catch a glimpse of the tears which delight her with their secret charm. She longs to wipe away those tears, or to gather them up like priceless diamonds with which to adorn her bridal dress. *Jesus! . . . Oh! I would so love Him! Love Him as He has never yet been loved! . . .*

At all cost I must win the palm of St. Agnes; if it cannot be mine through blood, I must win it by *love*.

V

1891.

Love can take the place of a long life. Jesus does not consider time, for He is eternal. He looks only at the love. My little Mother, beg Him to bestow it upon me in full

measure. I do not desire the thrill of love which I can feel; if Jesus feel its thrill, then that is enough for me. It is so sweet to love Him, to make Him loved. Ask Him to take me to Him on my profession day, if by living on I should ever offend Him, because I wish to bear unsullied to Heaven the white robe of my second Baptism.[1] Now, Jesus can grant me the grace never to offend Him more, or rather never to commit any faults but those which do not offend Him or give Him pain; faults which serve but to humble me and strengthen my love. There is no one to lean on apart from Jesus. He alone will not fail, and it is exceeding joy to remember He can never change.

VI

1891.

My dearest little Mother,—Your letter has done me such good. The sentence, "Let us refrain from saying a word which could raise us in the esteem of others," has indeed enlightened my soul. Yes, we must keep all for Jesus with jealous care. It is so good to work for Him alone. How it fills the heart with joy, and lends wings to the soul! Ask of Jesus that Thérèse—His *grain of sand*—may save Him a multitude of souls in a short space of time, so that she may the sooner behold his adorable Face.

VII

1892.

Here is the dream of this "grain of sand": Love Jesus alone, and naught else beside! The grain of sand is so small that if it wished to open its heart to any other but Jesus, there would no longer be room for this Beloved.

What happiness to be so entirely hidden that no one gives us a thought—to be unknown even to those with whom we live! My little Mother, I long to be unknown to every one of God's creatures! I have never desired glory amongst men, and if their contempt used to attract my heart, I have realised that even that is too glorious for me, and I thirst to be forgotten.

The glory of Jesus—this is my sole ambition. I abandon

[1] Saint Thérèse here alludes to the probable opinion of theologians that—as in Baptism—all stain of sin is removed and all temporal punishment for sin remitted, by the vows taken on the day of religious profession. [Ed.]

my glory to Him; and if He seem to forget me, well, He is free to do so since I am no longer my own, but His. He will weary sooner of making me wait than I shall of waiting.

VIII

[One day when Saint Thérèse was suffering acutely from feverishness, one of the Sisters urged her to help in a difficult piece of painting. For a moment Thérèse's countenance betrayed an inward struggle, which did not escape the notice of Mother Agnes of Jesus. That same evening Thérèse wrote her the following letter.]

May 28, 1897.

My dearest Mother,—I have just been shedding sweet tears—tears of repentance, but still more of thankfulness and love. To-day I showed you the treasure of my patience, and how virtuous I am—I who preach so well to others! I am glad that you have seen my lack of perfection. You did not scold me, and yet I deserved it. But at all times your gentleness speaks to me more forcibly than would severe words. To me you are the image of God's mercy.

Sister N., on the contrary, is more often the image of God's severity. Well, I have just met her, and, instead of passing me coldly by, she embraced me and said: "Poor little Sister, I am so sorry . . . I do not want to tire you; it was wrong of me to ask your help, leave the work alone." In my heart I felt perfect sorrow, and I was much surprised to escape all blame. I know she must really think me imperfect. She spoke in this way because she thinks I am soon to die. However that may be, I have heard nothing but kind and tender words from her lips; so I consider her most kind, and myself an unamiable creature.

When I returned to our cell, I was wondering what Jesus thought, when all at once I remembered His words to the woman taken in adultery: "*Hath no man condemned thee?*"[1] With tears in my eyes I answered Him: "No one, Lord . . . neither my little Mother—the image of Thy mercy—nor Sister N., the image of Thy justice. I feel that I can go in peace, because neither wilt Thou condemn me."

I confess I am much happier because of my weakness than if—sustained by grace—I had been a model of patience. It does me so much good to see that Jesus is always sweet and tender towards me. Truly, it is enough to make me die of grateful love.

[1] John viii. 10.

My little Mother, you will understand how this evening the vessel of God's mercy has overflowed for your child. . . . *Even now I know it! Yea, all my hopes will be fulfilled.* . . .

VERILY THE LORD WILL WORK WONDERS FOR ME, AND THEY WILL INFINITELY SURPASS MY BOUNDLESS DESIRES.

LETTERS TO SISTER MARY OF THE SACRED HEART

I

February 21, 1888.

My dear Marie,—You cannot think what a lovely present Papa made me last week; I believe if I gave you a hundred or even a thousand guesses you would never find out what it was. Well, my dear father bought me a new-born lamb, all white and fleecy. He said that before I entered Carmel he wanted me to have this pleasure. We were all delighted, especially Céline. What touched me more than anything was Papa's thoughtfulness. Besides, a lamb is symbolical, and it made me think of Pauline.

So far, so good, but now for the sequel. We were already building castles in the air, and expecting that in two or three days the lamb would be frisking round us. But the pretty creature died that same afternoon. Poor little thing, scarcely was it born when it took ill and died. It looked so gentle and innocent that Céline made a sketch of it; then we laid it in a grave dug by Papa. It appeared to be asleep. I did not want the earth to be its covering, so we put snow upon our pet, and that was the end.

You do not know, dearest godmother, how this little creature's death has made me reflect. Clearly we must not become attached to anything, no matter how innocent, because it will slip from our grasp when we least expect it; nothing but the eternal can content us.

II

(*Written during her retreat before receiving the habit.*)

January 8, 1889.

Your little *lamb*—as you love to call me, dearest sister—wishes to borrow from you a little courage. I cannot speak to Our Lord, and He is silent too. Pray that my retreat may

be pleasing to the Heart of Him who alone reads the secrets of the soul.

Life is full of sacrifice, it is true, but why seek happiness here? For life is but "a night to be spent in a wretched inn," as our holy Mother St. Teresa says. I assure you my heart thirsts ardently for happiness, but I see clearly that creatures cannot quench that thirst. On the contrary, the oftener I should drink from their tempting waters the more burning would my thirst become. I know a source where "*they that drink shall yet thirst*,"[1] but with a delicious thirst, a thirst one can always allay. . . . That source is the suffering of which Jesus alone is aware.

III

August 14, 1889.

You ask for a word from your little *lamb*. But what shall I say? Is it not you who have taught me? Remember those days when I sat upon your knee, and you talked to me of Paradise.

I can still hear you say: "Look at those who want to become rich, and see how they toil for gold. Now, little Thérèse, with far less trouble and at any hour of the day, we can lay up riches in the Kingdom of God. Heavenly diamonds are so plentiful that we can gather them, so to speak, with a garden rake, and we do this by performing all our actions for the love of God." Then I would leave you, my heart overflowing with joy, and fully bent on amassing great wealth.

Time has flown since those happy hours spent together in our dear nest. Jesus has visited us, and has found us worthy to be tried in the crucible of suffering. God has said that on the last day "*He will wipe away all tears from our eyes*,"[2] and no doubt the more tears there are to dry, the greater will be the happiness.

Pray to-morrow for the little one who owes you her upbringing, and who, without you, might never have reached Carmel.

IV

(*During her retreat before profession.*)

September 4, 1890.

The heavenly music falls but faintly on the ear of your child, and it has been a dreary journey towards her bridal day. It is true her Betrothed has led her through fertile lands and

[1] Ecclus. xxiv. 29.

[2] Apoc. xxi. 4.

gorgeous scenery, but the dark night has prevented her admiring, much less revelling in, the beauty all around. Perhaps you think this grieves her. Oh no! she is happy to follow her Betrothed for His own sake, and not for the sake of His gifts. He is so ravishingly beautiful, even when He is silent—even when He hides from us. Weary of earthly consolation, your little child wishes for her Beloved alone. I believe that the work of Jesus during this retreat has been to detach me from everything but Himself. My only comfort is the exceeding strength and peace that is mine. I hope to be just what He wills I should be, and in this lies all my happiness.

Did you but know how great is my joy at giving pleasure to Jesus through being utterly deprived of all joy! . . . This is the very refinement of joy—the joy we do not even feel.

V

September 7, 1890.

To-morrow I shall be the Spouse of Jesus, of Him whose "*look was as it were hidden and despised.*"[1] What a future is opened up! How can I thank Him, how render myself less unworthy of so great a favour?

I thirst after Heaven, that blessed abode where our love for Jesus will be without bounds. True, we must pass through suffering and tears to reach that home, but I wish to suffer all that my Beloved is pleased to send me; I wish to let Him do as He wills with His "little ball." You tell me, dearest godmother, that my Holy Child[2] is beautifully adorned for my wedding-day, but that you wonder why I have not put new rose-coloured candles. The old ones appeal to me more because they were lighted for the first time on my clothing-day. That day they were fresh and beautiful. Papa, who had given them, was there, and all was gladness. But now their tint has faded. Are there yet any rose-coloured joys on earth for your little Thérèse? No, for her there remain only the joys of Heaven . . . . Heaven, where the hollowness of all created things gives place to the uncreated Reality.

VI

My dearest Sister,— . . . How can you ask me if it be possible for you to love God as I love Him! My desire for martyrdom is as nothing; it is not to such desires I owe the bound-

[1] Isa. liii. 3.

[2] An allusion to the statue of the Holy Child in the cloister, which was under her own special care. [Ed.]

less confidence that fills my heart. They might be described as spiritual riches, which are *the mammon of iniquity*,[1] when one takes delight in them as in something great. . . . These aspirations are a consolation Jesus sometimes grants to weak souls like mine—and there are many such! But when He withholds this consolation, it is a special grace. Remember these words of a holy monk: "The martyrs suffered with joy, and the King of Martyrs in sorrow." Did not Jesus cry out, "*My Father, remove this chalice from Me*"?[2] Do not think, then, that my desires are a proof of my love. Indeed, I know well that it is certainly not because of them that God takes pleasure in my soul. What does please Him is to find me love my littleness, my poverty, and to see the blind trust which I have in His mercy. . . . That is my sole treasure, dearest godmother, and why should it not be yours?

Are you not ready to suffer all that God wills? Assuredly; and so if you wish to know joy and to love suffering, you are really seeking your own consolation, because once we love, all suffering disappears. In truth, if we were to go together to martyrdom, you would gain great merit, and I should have none, unless it pleased Our Lord to change my dispositions.

Dear sister, you who love Jesus and long to be His little victim, do you not understand that the more weak and wretched we are, the better material do we make for His consuming and transfiguring fire? . . . The simple desire to be a victim suffices, but we must also consent to remain always poor and helpless, and here lies the difficulty: "Where shall we find one that is truly poor in spirit? We must seek him afar off," says the author of the *Imitation*.[3] He does not say that we must search among great souls, but "afar off"—that is to say, in abasement and in nothingness. Let us remain far from all that dazzles, loving our littleness, and content to have no joy. Then we shall be truly poor in spirit, and Jesus will come to seek us, however far off we may be, and transform us into flames of love. . . . I long to make you understand what I feel. Confidence alone must lead us to love. . . . Does not fear lead to the thought of the strict justice that is threatened to sinners? But that is not the justice Jesus will show to such as love Him.

God would not vouchsafe you the desire to be the victim of His merciful love, were this not a favour in store—or rather already granted, since you are wholly surrendered unto Him

[1] Luke xvi. 2. [2] Luke xxii. 42.
[3] Cf. *Imit.* II., ch. xi. 4.

and long to be consumed by Him, and God never inspires a longing which He cannot fulfil.

The road lies clear, and along it we must run together. I feel that Jesus wishes to bestow on us the same graces; He wishes to grant us both a free entrance into His kingdom. Dearest godmother, you would like to hear more of the secrets which Jesus confides to your child, but human speech cannot tell what the human heart itself can scarcely conceive. Besides, Jesus confides His secrets to you likewise. This I know, for you it was who taught me to listen to His divine teaching. On the day of my Baptism you promised in my name that I would serve Him alone. You were the angel who led me and guided me in my days of exile and offered me to Our Lord, so that I love you even as a child loves its mother, and not until we pass through the gates of Heaven will you realise the gratitude with which my heart is full to overflowing.

Your little daughter,

THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS

LETTERS TO SISTER FRANCES TERESA

I

August 13, 1893.

DEAR LITTLE SISTER,—At last your desires are satisfied. Like the dove sent forth from the ark, you have been unable to find a spot on earth whereon to rest, and have long been on the wing seeking to re-enter the blessed abode where your heart had for ever fixed its home. Jesus has kept you waiting, but at last, touched by the plaintive cry of His dove, He has put forth His divine hand, and, taking hold of it, has set it in His heart—that sanctuary of His love.

It is quite a spiritual joy, this joy of mine. For I shall never look upon you again, never hear your voice as I outpour my heart into yours. Yet I know that earth is but a halting-place to us who journey towards a heavenly home. What matter if our roads lie apart? Our goal is the same—that Heaven where we shall meet, no more to be separated. There we shall taste for ever the sweets of our earthly home. We shall have much to tell one another when this exile is ended. Speech here below is so inadequate, but a single glance will be enough for perfect understanding in our home beyond; and I believe that our happiness will be greater than if we had never been parted here.

Meanwhile we must live by sacrifice. Without it there would be no merit in the religious life. As someone told us in a conference: "The reason why the forest oak raises its head so high is because, hemmed in on all sides, it wastes no sap in putting forth branches underneath, but towers aloft. Thus in the religious life the soul, hedged in all around by the rule and by the practice of community life, of necessity finds there a means of lifting a high head towards Heaven."

Dearest sister, pray for your little Thérèse that she may draw profit from her exile on earth and from the plentiful means granted her of meriting Heaven.

II

January, 1895.

Dear little Sister,—How fruitful for Heaven has been the year that is gone! . . . Our dear father has seen that which the eye of man cannot see, he has heard the minstrelsy of the angels . . . now his heart understands, and his soul enjoys "*the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him.*"[1] . . . Our turn will come, and it is sweet to think our sails are set for the eternal shore.

Do you not find, as I do, that our beloved father's death has drawn us nearer to Heaven? More than half of our loved ones already enjoy the vision of God, and the five who remain in exile will follow soon. The thought of the shortness of life gives me courage, and helps me to put up with the weariness of the journey. What matters a little toil upon earth? We pass . . . "*We have not here a lasting city.*"[2]

Think of your Thérèse during this month of the Infant Jesus, and beg of Him that she may always remain a very little child. I shall offer the same prayer for you, because I know your desires, and that humility is your favourite virtue.

Which Thérèse will be the more fervent? . . . She who will be the more humble, the more closely united to Jesus, and the more faithful in making love the mainspring of every action. We must not let slip one single occasion of sacrifice, everything has such value in the religious life. . . . Pick up a pin from a motive of love, and you may thereby convert a soul. Jesus alone can make our deeds of such worth, so let us love Him with every fibre of our hearts.

III

July 12, 1896.

My dear little Léonie,—I should have answered your letter last Sunday if it had been given to me, but you know that, being the youngest, I run the risk of not seeing letters for a considerable time after my sisters, and occasionally not at all. I read yours only on Friday, so forgive my delay.

You are right—Jesus is content with a tender look or a sigh of love. For my part, I find it quite easy to practise perfection, now that I realise it only means making Jesus captive through His heart. Look at a little child who has just vexed its mother, either by giving way to temper or by disobedience. If it hides in a corner and is sulky, or if it cries for fear of being punished,

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

[2] Heb. xiii. 14.

the mother will certainly not forgive the fault. But should it run to her with its little arms outstretched, and say: "Kiss me, Mother, I will not do it again!" what mother would not straightway clasp the child lovingly to her heart, and forget all it had done? . . . She knows quite well that her little one will repeat the fault—no matter, her darling will escape all punishment as often as it appeals to her heart.

Even when the law of fear was in force, before Our Lord's coming, the prophet Isaias said—speaking in the name of the King of Heaven: "*Can a woman forget her babe? . . . And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee.*"[1] What a touching promise! We who live under the law of love, shall we not profit by the loving advances made by our Spouse? How can anybody fear Him who allows Himself to be made captive "*with one hair of our neck*"?[2]

Let us learn to keep Him prisoner—this God, the Divine Beggar of Love. By telling us that a single hair can work this wonder, He shows us that the smallest actions done for His love are those which charm His Heart. If it were necessary to do great things, we should be deserving of pity, but we are fortunate indeed, since Jesus lets Himself be led captive by the smallest action. . . . With you, dear Léonie, little sacrifices are never lacking. Is not your life made up of them? I rejoice to see you in possession of such wealth, especially when I remember that you know how to put it to good use, not only for yourself, but also for poor sinners. It is so sweet to help Jesus to save the souls which He has ransomed at the price of His Precious Blood, and which only await our help to hold them back from the abyss.

It seems to me that if our sacrifices take Jesus captive, our joys make Him prisoner too. All that is needful to attain this end is that, instead of giving ourselves over to selfish happiness, we offer to our Spouse the little joys He scatters in our path to charm our hearts and draw them towards Him.

You ask for news of my health. Well, my cough has quite disappeared. Does that please you? It will not prevent Our Lord from taking me to Himself whensoever He wishes. And I need not prepare for the journey, since my whole endeavour is to remain as a little child. Jesus Himself must pay all its expenses, as well as the price of my admission to Heaven.

Good-bye, dearest one, pray to Him without fail for the last and least of your sisters.

[1] Isa. xlix. 15. [2] Cant. iv. 9.

Letters to Sister Frances Teresa

IV

July 17, 1897.

My dear Léonie,—I am so pleased to be able to write to you. Some days ago I thought I should never again have this consolation, but it seems God wishes to prolong somewhat the time of my exile. This does not trouble me—I would not enter Heaven one moment sooner through my own will. The only real happiness on earth is to strive always to think "*how goodly is the chalice*"[1] that Jesus gives us. Yours is indeed a most beautiful one, dear Léonie. If you wish to be a saint —and it will not be hard—keep only one end in view: give pleasure to Jesus, and bind yourself more closely to Him.

Good-bye, my dear sister, I should wish the thought of my entering Heaven to fill you with joy, because I shall then be better able to give you proof of my tender love. In the heart of our Heavenly Spouse we shall live His very life, and through eternity I shall remain,

Your very little sister,

Thérèse of the Child Jesus.[2]

[1] Ps. xxii. 5.
[2] Nearly all the letters addressed to Léonie have been lost.

LETTERS TO HER COUSIN, MARIE GUERIN

I

1888.

Before you confided in me [with regard to scruples], I felt you were suffering, and my heart was one with yours. Since you have the humility to ask advice of your little Thérèse, this is what she thinks: you have grieved me greatly by abstaining from Holy Communion, because you have grieved Our Lord. The devil must be very cunning to deceive a soul in this way. Do you not know, dear Marie, that by acting thus you help him to accomplish his end? The treacherous creature knows quite well that when a soul is striving to belong wholly to God he cannot cause her to sin, so he merely tries to persuade her that she falls. This is a considerable gain, but not enough to satisfy his hatred, so he aims at something more, and tries to shut out Jesus from a tabernacle which Jesus covets. Unable to enter the sanctuary himself, he wishes that at least it remain empty and without its God. Alas! what will become of that poor little heart? When the devil has succeeded in keeping a soul from Holy Communion he has gained all his ends . . . while Jesus weeps! . . .

Remember, little Marie, that our sweet Jesus is there in the Tabernacle expressly for you and you alone. Remember that He burns with the desire to enter your heart. Do not listen to the enemy. Laugh him to scorn, and go without fear to receive Jesus, the God of peace and of love.

"Thérèse thinks all this"—you say—"because she does not know my difficulties." She does know, and knows them well; she understands everything, and she tells you confidently that you can go without fear to receive your only true Friend. She, too, has passed through the martyrdom of scruples, but Jesus gave her the grace to be always faithful to Holy Communion, even when she imagined she had committed great sins. I assure you I have found that this is the only means of ridding

oneself of the devil. When he sees he is losing his time . . . he leaves us in peace.

In truth, it is impossible that a heart which can find rest only in contemplation of the tabernacle—and yours is such, you tell me—could so far offend Our Lord as not to be able to receive Him. . . . What does offend Jesus, what wounds Him to the Heart, is want of confidence.

Pray that the best portion of your life may not be overshadowed by idle fears. We have only life's brief moments to spend for the glory of God, and well does Satan know it. That is why he employs every ruse to make us consume them in useless labour. Dear sister, go often to Holy Communion, go very often—that is your one remedy.

II

1894.

You are like some little village maiden who, when sought in marriage by a mighty king, will not dare to accept him, on the plea that she is not rich enough, and is strange to the ways of a court. But does not her royal lover know better than she the extent of her poverty and ignorance?

Marie, though you are nothing, do not forget that Jesus is all. You have only to lose your own nothingness in that Infinite All, and thenceforth to think only of that All, who alone is worthy of your love.

You tell me you wish to see the fruit of your efforts. That is exactly what Jesus would hide from you. He likes to contemplate by Himself these little fruits of our virtue. They console Him.

You are quite wrong, Marie, if you think that Thérèse walks eagerly along the way of sacrifice: her weakness is still very great, and every day some new and wholesome experience brings this home more clearly. Yet Jesus delights to teach her how to *glory in her infirmities*.[1] It is a great grace, and I pray Him to give it to you, for with it come peace and tranquillity of heart. When we see our misery we do not like to look at ourselves, but only upon our Beloved.

You ask me for a method of attaining perfection. I know of Love—and Love only! Our hearts are made for it alone. Sometimes I endeavour to find some other word for love; but in a land of exile "words which have a beginning and an

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 5.

end"[1] are quite unable to render adequately the emotions of the soul, and so we must keep to the one simple word—Love.

But on whom shall our poor hearts lavish this love, and who will be worthy of the treasure? Is there anyone who will understand it and—above all—is there anyone who will be able to repay? Dear Marie, Jesus alone understands. He alone can give back all—yea, all and infinitely more than the utmost we can give.

LETTER TO HER COUSIN, JEANNE GUÉRIN

(Madame La Néele)

August, 1895.

It is a very great sacrifice that God has asked of you, my dear Jeanne, in calling your little Marie to Carmel; but remember that He has promised a hundredfold to anyone who for His Love has left father or mother or *sister*.[2] Now, for love of Jesus, you have not hesitated to part with a sister dearer to you than words can say, and therefore He is bound to keep His promise. I know that these words are generally applied to those who enter the religious life, but my heart tells me they were spoken, too, for those whose generosity is such that they will sacrifice to God even the loved ones they hold dearer than life itself.

[1] St. Augustine.

[2] Mark x. 30.

LETTERS TO HER BROTHER MISSIONARIES[1]

I

1895.

Our Divine Lord asks no sacrifice beyond our strength. At times, it is true, He makes us taste to the full the bitterness of the chalice He puts to our lips. And when He demands the sacrifice of all that is dearest on earth, it is impossible without a very special grace not to cry out as He did during His Agony in the Garden: "*My Father, let this chalice pass from Me!*" But we must hasten to add: "*Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"[2] It is so consoling to think that Jesus, "*the Strong God*,"[3] has felt all our weaknesses and shuddered at the sight of the bitter chalice—that very chalice He had so ardently desired.

Your lot is indeed a beautiful one, since Our Lord has chosen it for you, and has first touched with His own lips the cup which He holds out to yours. A saint has said: "The greatest honour God can bestow upon a soul is not to give to it great things, but to ask of it great things." Jesus treats you as a privileged child. It is His wish you should begin your mission even now,[4] and save souls through the Cross. Was it not by suffering and death that He ransomed the world? I know that you aspire to the happiness of laying down your life for Him; but the martyrdom of the heart is not less fruitful than the shedding of blood, and this martyrdom is already yours. Have I not, then, good reason to say that your lot is a beautiful one—worthy an apostle of Christ?

II

1896.

Let us work together for the salvation of souls! We have but the one day of this life to save them, and so give to Our Lord a proof of our love. To-morrow will be eternity, then

[1] See p. 188. [2] Matt. xxvi. 39. [3] Cf. Isa. ix. 6.
[4] This letter and the following are addressed to a Seminarist. [ED.]

Jesus will reward you a hundredfold for the sweet joys you have given up for Him. He knows the extent of your sacrifice. He knows that the sufferings of those you hold dear increase your own; but He has suffered this same martyrdom for our salvation. He, too, left His Mother; He saw that sinless Virgin standing at the foot of the Cross, her heart pierced through with a sword of sorrow, and I hope He will console your own dear mother. . . . I beg Him most earnestly to do so.

Ah! if the Divine Master would permit those you are about to leave for His love one glimpse of the glory awaiting you, and of the vast retinue of souls that will escort you to Heaven, they would deem themselves already well repaid for the great sacrifice that is at hand.

III

February 24, 1896.

Please say this little prayer for me each day; it sums up all my desires:

"Merciful Father, in the name of Thy sweet Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin, and all the Saints, I beg Thee to consume my sister with Thy Spirit of love, and to grant her the grace to make Thee greatly loved."

If Our Lord takes me soon to Himself, I ask you still to continue this prayer, because my longing will be the same in Heaven as upon earth: *to love Jesus and to make Him loved.*

IV

I count on not being idle in Heaven, for it is my wish to continue to work for the Church and for souls. I ask this grace from God and I am certain He will grant it. So you see that if I am leaving the battlefield, it is not with the selfish desire of taking my repose. It is a long time since suffering became my paradise on earth, and I find it hard to understand how I shall become acclimatised in a land where joy reigns supreme and alone. Jesus must entirely change this soul of mine, otherwise it could not endure eternal bliss.

All I desire is God's holy will, and if in Heaven I could no longer work for His glory, I should prefer exile to home.

V

June 21, 1897.

You may well sing of the mercies of God! They shine forth in you with splendour. You love St. Augustine and St. Mary Magdalen, those souls to whom many sins were forgiven because they loved much. I love them too; I love their sorrow and affectionate daring. When I see Mary Magdalen come forth before all Simon's guests to wash with her tears the Master's feet, those feet that for the first time she touches, I feel her heart has fathomed that abyss of love and mercy, the Heart of Jesus. I feel, too, that not only was He willing to forgive, but willing even liberally to dispense the favours of a divine and intimate friendship, and to raise her to the loftiest heights of prayer.

My Brother, since I also have been given to understand the love of the Heart of Jesus, I confess that all fear has been driven from mine. The remembrance of my faults humbles me, and helps me never to rely upon my own strength, which is mere weakness. More than all, it speaks to me of mercy and of love. When a soul with childlike trust casts her faults into Love's all-devouring furnace, how can they escape being utterly consumed?

I know that many saints have passed their lives in the practice of amazing penance for the sake of expiating their sins. But what of that? "*In My Father's house there are many mansions.*"[1] These are the words of Jesus, and therefore I follow the path He marks out for me; I try to be nowise concerned about myself, and to abandon unreservedly to Him the work He deigns to accomplish in my soul.

VI

1897.

On this earth where everything changes, one thing alone does never change—our Heavenly King's treatment of His friends. From the day He raised the standard of the Cross, in its shadow all must fight and win. "The life of every missionary abounds in crosses," said Théophane Vénard.[2] And again: "True happiness consists in suffering, and in order to live we must die."

Rejoice, dear Brother, that the first efforts of your apostolate are stamped with the seal of the Cross. Far more by suffering

[1] John xiv. 2.

[2] See note, p. 220.

and by persecution than by eloquent discourses does Jesus wish to build up His kingdom.

You are still—you tell me—a little child who cannot speak. Neither could Father Mazel, who was ordained with you, and yet he has already won the palm. . . . How the thoughts of God are far above our own! When I learnt that this young missionary had died before he had set foot on the field of his labours, I felt myself drawn to invoke him. I seemed to see him amidst the glorious martyr choir. No doubt, in the eyes of men he does not merit the title of Martyr, but in the eyes of God this inglorious death is no less precious than the sacrifice of him who lays down his life for the Faith.

Though one must indeed be pure before appearing in the sight of the All-Holy God, still I know that He is infinitely just, and the very justice which terrifies so many souls is the source of all my confidence and joy. Justice is not only stern severity towards the guilty; it takes account of the good intention, and gives to virtue its reward. Indeed, I hope as much from the justice of God as from His mercy. It is because He is just that "*He is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy. For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him.*"[1]

O my Brother, after these beautiful and consoling words of the Royal Prophet, how can we doubt God's power to open the gates of His kingdom to the children who have loved Him unto perfect sacrifice, who have not only left home and country so as to make Him known and loved, but even long to lay down their lives for Him? . . . Jesus said truly there is no greater love than this. Nor will He be outdone in generosity. How could He cleanse in the flames of Purgatory souls consumed with the fire of divine love?

I have used many words to express my thought, but without success. What I wish to convey is that, in my opinion, all missionaries are martyrs by will and desire, and not even one should pass through the purifying flames.

This, then, is what I think about the justice of God; my own way is all confidence and love, and I cannot understand those souls who are afraid of so affectionate a friend. Sometimes, when I read books in which perfection is put before us with the goal obstructed by a thousand obstacles, my poor little head is quickly fatigued. I close the learned treatise which

[1] Ps. cii. 8, 13, 14.

tires my brain and dries up my heart, and I turn to the Sacred Scriptures. Then all becomes clear—a single word opens out infinite vistas, perfection appears easy, and I see it is enough to acknowledge one's nothingness and surrender oneself like a child to God's affectionate arms. Leaving to great and lofty minds the beautiful books which I cannot understand, still less put in practice, I rejoice in my littleness because "*only little children and those who are like them shall be admitted to the Heavenly Banquet.*"[1] Fortunately—"*there are many mansions in My Father's house*":[2] if there were only those seemingly incomprehensible mansions with their baffling approaches, I should certainly never enter there. . . .

VII

July 13, 1897.

Your soul is too great to cling to the consolations of earth, and even now its abode should be in Heaven, for it is written: "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"[3] Is not Jesus your only treasure? He is in Paradise, and it is there your heart should dwell. Our sweet Saviour has long since forgotten your infidelities. He sees only your longing after perfection, and the sight rejoices His heart.

Stay no longer at His feet, I beseech you, but follow this first impulse to throw yourself into His arms. Your place is there, and I see clearly—more clearly than in your former letters—that every other road to Heaven is barred to you save the way your little sister treads.

I agree with you that the Heart of Jesus is more grieved by the thousand little imperfections of His friends than by the faults, even grave, which His enemies commit. Yet it seems to me, dear Brother, it is only when those who are His own are habitually guilty of want of thought, and neglect to seek His pardon, that He can say: "*These wounds which you see in the midst of My hands I have received in the house of those who love Me.*"[4] But His heart thrills with joy when He has to deal with all those who truly love, and who after each little fault come to fling themselves into His arms, imploring forgiveness. He says to His angels what the prodigal's father said to his servants: "*Put a ring upon his finger, and let us rejoice.*"[5] O Brother! how little known is the merciful love of the Heart of Jesus! It is true that to enjoy that

[1] Cf. Matt. xix. 14. [2] John xiv. 2. [3] Luke xii. 34.
[4] Cf. Zach. xiii. 6. [5] Cf. Luke xv. 22.

treasure we must humble ourselves, must confess our nothingness . . . and here is where many a soul draws back.

VIII

1897.

What attracts me towards our heavenly home is the Master's call—the hope of loving Him at last to the fulfilling of all my desires—the thought that I shall be able to win Him the love of a multitude of souls, who will bless Him through all eternity.

I have never asked God that I might die young—I should have deemed it a cowardly prayer; but from childhood He has deigned to inspire me with a strong conviction that my life on earth will be short.

I feel we must tread the same road to Heaven, the road of suffering and love. When I myself have reached the port, I will teach you how best to sail the world's tempestuous sea—with the self-abandonment of a child well aware of its father's love, and of his vigilance in the hour of danger.

I long so much to make you understand the expectant love of the Heart of Jesus. Your last letter has made my own heart thrill sweetly. I learnt how closely your soul is sister to mine, since God calls it to mount to Himself by the *lift of love*, without climbing the steep stairway of fear. I am not surprised you find it hard to be familiar with Jesus—one cannot become so in a day; but I shall aid you much more to tread this beautiful path when I lay aside the burden of my mortal frame. A little longer and you will exclaim with St. Augustine: "*Love it is that draweth me.*"[1]

IX

July 26, 1897.

When you read these few lines I shall perhaps be no more. I know not the future; yet I can confidently say that my Spouse is at the door. It would need a miracle to keep me in exile, and I do not think that Jesus will work one, since He does nothing that is useless.

Brother, I am so happy to die! Yes, happy . . . not because I shall be free from suffering: on the contrary, suffering combined with love seems the one thing worthy of desire in this vale of tears; but happy to die because far more than on earth I shall help the souls I hold dear.

[1] "Amor meus pondus meum."

Jesus has always treated me as a spoilt child. . . . It is true that His Cross has been with me from the cradle, but for the Cross He has given me a passionate love. . . .

X

August 14, 1897.

I am about to go before God, and I understand now more than ever that one thing only is needful—to work for Him alone, and do nothing for self or for creatures. Jesus wishes to own your heart completely. Before this can be, you will have much to suffer . . . but oh! what joy when comes the happy hour of going Home! I shall not die—I do but enter into Life . . . and whatsoever I cannot tell you here upon earth I will make you understand from the heights of Heaven. . . .

Note on Letter VI.—On account of the extreme importance of this letter, which throws much light on our Saint's *little way* to perfection, and condemns ways that are too complex, a portion of the original text is given here.

"S'il faut être bien pur pour paraître devant le Dieu de toute sainteté, je sais, moi, qu'il est infiniment juste; et cette justice qui effraie tant d'âmes fait le sujet de ma joie et de ma confiance. Être juste, ce n'est pas seulement exercer la sévérité envers les coupables, c'est encore reconnaître les intentions droites et récompenser la vertu. J'espère autant de la justice du bon Dieu que de sa miséricorde; c'est parce qu'il est juste *'qu'il est compatissant et rempli de douceur, lent à punir et abondant en miséricorde. Car il connaît notre fragilité, il se souvient que nous ne sommes que poussière. Comme un père a de la tendresse pour ses enfants, ainsi le Seigneur a compassion de nous! . . .'* (Ps. cii.).

"Voilà, mon frère, ce que je pense de la justice du bon Dieu; ma voie est toute de confiance et d'amour, je ne comprends pas les âmes qui ont peur d'un si tendre Ami. Parfois, lorsque je lis certains traités où la perfection est montrée à travers mille entraves, mon pauvre petit esprit se fatigue bien vite, je ferme le savant livre qui me casse la tête et me dessèche le cœur, et je prends l'Ecriture Sainte. Alors tout me paraît lumineux, une seule parole découvre à mon âme des horizons infinis, la perfection me semble facile, je vois qu'il suffit de reconnaître son néant et de s'abandonner, comme un enfant, dans les bras du bon Dieu. Laissant aux grandes âmes, aux

esprits sublimes les beaux livres que je ne puis comprendre, encore moins mettre en pratique, je me réjouis d'être petite, puisque '*les enfants seuls et ceux qui leur ressemblent seront admis au banquet céleste*' (Matt. xix.). Heureusement que le Royaume des Cieux est composé de plusieurs demeures! car, s'il n'y avait que celles dont la description et le chemin me semblent incompréhensibles, certainement je n'y entrerais jamais. . . ."

SELECTED POEMS OF SAINT THÉRÈSE, THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

MY SONG OF TO-DAY

Oh ! how I love Thee, Jesus ! my soul aspires to Thee—
And yet for one day only my simple prayer I pray !
Come reign within my heart, smile tenderly on me,
To-day, dear Lord, to-day !

But if I dare take thought of what the morrow brings,
It fills my fickle heart with dreary, dull dismay ;
I crave, indeed, my God, the Cross and sufferings,
But only for to-day !

O sweetest Star of Heaven ! O Virgin, spotless, blest,
Shining with Jesus' light, guiding to Him my way !
Mother ! beneath thy veil let my tired spirit rest,
For this brief passing day !

Soon shall I fly afar among the holy choirs,
Then shall be mine the joy that knoweth no decay ;
And then my lips shall sing, to Heaven's angelic lyres,
The eternal glad to-day !

June, 1894.

MEMORIES

Selected Stanzas

"I find in my Beloved the mountains, the lonely and wooded vales, the distant isles, the murmur of the waters, the soft whisper of the zephyrs . . . the quiet night with its sister the dawn, the perfect solitude—all that delights and all that fires our love."—St. John of the Cross.

I hold full sweet your memory,
My childhood days, so glad, so free.
To keep my innocence, dear Lord, for Thee,
Thy love came to me night and day,
Alway.

. . . . .

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

I loved the swallows' graceful flight,
The turtle doves' low chant at night,
The pleasant sound of insects gay and bright,
The grassy vale where doth belong
Their song.

. . . . .

I loved the glow-worm on the sod;
The countless stars, so near to God.
But most I loved, in all the sky abroad,
The shining moon of silver bright,
At night.

. . . . .

The grass is withered in its bed;
The flowers within my hands are dead.
Would that my weary feet, Jesu! might tread
Thy Heavenly Fields, and I might be
With Thee!

. . . . .

My rainbow in the rain-washed skies—
Horizon where my suns arise—
My isle in far-off seas—pearl I most prize—
Sweet spring and butterflies—I see
In Thee!

. . . . .

In Thee I have the springs, the rills,
The mignonette, the daffodils,
The eglantine, the harebell on the hills,
The trembling poplar, sighing low
And slow.

. . . . .

The lovely lake, the valley fair
And lonely in the lambent air,
The ocean touched with silver everywhere—
In Thee their treasures, all combined,
I find.

. . . . .

I go to chant, with Angel-throngs,
The homage that to Thee belongs.
Soon let me fly away, to join their songs!
Oh, let me die of love, I pray,
One day!

. . . . .

I hear, e'en I, Thy last and least,
The music from Thy Heavenly Feast;
There, deign receive me as thy loving guest
And, to my harp, let me but sing,
My King!

. . . . .

Unto the Saints I shall be near,
To Mary, and those once treasured here.
Life is all past, and dried is every tear;
To me my home again is given—
In Heaven.

April 28, 1895.

I THIRST FOR LOVE

In wondrous love, thou didst come down from Heaven
To immolate Thyself, O Christ, for me;
So, in my turn, my love to Thee is given—
I wish to suffer and to die for Thee.

Thou, Lord, didst speak this truth benign:
"To die for one loved tenderly,
Of greatest love on earth is sign";
And now, such love is mine—
Such love for Thee!

Do thou abide with me, O Pilgrim blest!
Behind the hill fast sinks the dying day.
Helped by Thy Cross, I mount the rocky crest;
Oh, come, to guide me on my Heavenward Way.

To be like Thee is my desire;
Thy Voice finds echo in my soul.
Suffering I crave! Thy words of fire
Lift me above earth's mire,
And sin's control.

Chanting Thy victories, gloriously sublime,
The Seraphim—all Heaven—cry to me,
That even Thou, to conquer sin and crime,
Upon this earth a sufferer needs must be.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

For me upon life's dreary way
What scorn, what anguish Thou didst bear!
Let me but hide me day by day,
Be least of all, alway
Thy lot to share.

Ah, Christ! Thy great example teaches me
Myself to humble, honours to despise.
A little one—as Thou—I choose to be,
Forgetting self, so I may charm Thine eyes.

My peace I find in solitude,
Nor ask I more, dear Lord, than this:
Be Thou my sole beatitude,
And ever—in Thee—renewed
My joy, my bliss!

Thou, the great God whom earth and heaven adore,
Thou dwell'st a prisoner for me night and day;
And every hour I hear Thy voice implore:
"I thirst—I thirst—I thirst—for love alway!"

I, too, Thy prisoner am I;
I, too, cry ever unto Thee
Thine own divine and tender cry:
"I thirst!" Oh, let me die
Of love for Thee.

For love of Thee I thirst! fulfil my hope;
Augment in me Thine own celestial flame!
For love of Thee I thirst! too scant earth's scope:
The glorious vision of Thy face I claim!

My long, slow martyrdom of fire
Still more and more consumeth me.
Thou art my joy, my one desire,
Jesu! may I expire
Of love for Thee.

April 30, 1896.

TO SCATTER FLOWERS

O Jesus ! O my Love ! each eve I come to fling
My springtide roses sweet before Thy cross divine ;
By their plucked petals fair, my hands so gladly bring,
I long to dry each tear of Thine !

To scatter flowers !—that means each sacrifice :
My lightest sighs and pains, my heaviest, saddest hours,
My hopes, my joys, my prayers—I will not count the price—
Behold my flowers !

With deep untold delight Thy beauty fills my soul,
Would I might light this love in hearts of all who live !
For this, my fairest flowers, all things in my control,
How fondly, gladly would I give !

To scatter flowers !—behold my chosen sword
For saving sinners' souls and filling Heaven's bowers :
The victory is mine—yea, I disarm Thee, Lord,
With these my flowers !

The petals in their flight caress Thy Holy Face ;
They tell Thee that my heart is Thine, and Thine alone.
Thou knowest what these leaves are saying in my place :
On me Thou smilest from Thy throne.

To scatter flowers !—that means, to speak of Thee—
My only pleasure here, where tears fill all the hours ;
But soon, with angel hosts, my spirit shall be free
To scatter flowers.

June 28, 1896.

WHY I LOVE THEE, MARY !

Last Poem written by Saint Thérèse

Concluding Stanzas

Henceforth thy shelter in thy woe was John's most humble dwelling ;
The son of Zebedee replaced the Son whom Heaven adored.
Naught else the Gospels tell us of thy life, in grace excelling ;
It is the last they say of thee, sweet Mother of my Lord !

But oh! I think that silence means that, high in Heaven's glory,
When time is past, and to their house thy children safe are come,
The Eternal Word, my Mother dear, Himself will tell thy story,
To charm our souls—thy children's souls—in our eternal home.

Soon I shall hear that harmony, that blissful, wondrous singing;
Soon, unto Heaven that waits for us, my soul shall swiftly fly.
O thou who cam'st to smile on me at dawn of life's beginning!
Come once again to smile on me . . . Mother! the night is nigh.

I fear no more thy majesty, so far removed above me,
For I have suffered sore with thee: now hear me, Mother mild!
Oh, let me tell thee face to face, dear Mary! how I love thee;
And say to thee for evermore: I am Thy little child.

May, 1897.

NOTE.—*The above poems are reprinted from the translation of the Little Flower's poems made by the late Susan L. Emery, R.I.P., of Dorchester, Mass., U.S.A. They are published by the Carmel of Boston. If, however, it is difficult to convey in the English tongue the exquisite charm of the prose of St. Thérèse, it is still more difficult to preserve the aroma of her poems, as simple as they are beautiful.* [ED.]

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"The Little Flower of Jesus"

THE SHOWER OF ROSES, BEING FAVOURS OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

THE SHOWER OF ROSES

One by one she plucked the petals
From the roses white and red ;
Plucked them with her dying fingers,
Kissed and strewed them round her Dead.

In her eyes the piteous vision
Of His foretold leper Face ;
In her ears the ruthless jeering
Round the Fairest of our race.

Day by day, Thérèse of Carmel,
Like the flowers of Calvary,
Gave unto the stricken Jesus
Perfume sweet of sympathy.

Gave to Him white innocences,
Many an unseen sacrifice,
Love that fain would have outrivalled
All the loves of Paradise.

Now from Thabor's heights she tells us
Each the *little way* to trace,
And 'tis Christ who plucks the roses
For the Angel of His Face.

Swift our Seraph casts them from her,
Over Eden's jasper wall ;
East to West—a myriad blossoms—
Thick as snow the rose flakes fall.

From her grasp still falling, falling,
Soft the perfumed shower descends :
Petals white for souls of scarlet—
Red love-petals for her friends.

And when *little souls* are saddest
  Downward comes this gracious Queen,
Brings—herself—to earth the roses:
  Earth is Eden then, I ween.

Thus she keeps her promise daring:
  "I—the Floweret shy of yore—
Heaven shall spend in sweet well-doing,
  Rose-queen be till Earth's no more."

T. N. T.

I WILL SPEND MY HEAVEN IN DOING GOOD UPON EARTH . . . IN HEAVEN GOD WILL DO ALL I DESIRE BECAUSE I HAVE NEVER DONE MY OWN WILL ON EARTH . . . AFTER MY DEATH I WILL LET FALL

A SHOWER OF ROSES

"ROME has spoken," and in the memorable phrase which heralded the Pontifical decision on May 17, 1925, Peter announced through the voice of Pius that Thérèse of the Child Jesus was one of God's Saints. Rarely, perhaps, has Rome spoken so emphatically—and the Papal documents testify to the emphasis—but rarely, too, does God enrich His Church with one who is both a "miracle of virtues" and a "prodigy of miracles." Yet such, according to Pius XI, was St. Thérèse.

Those miracles—or "Roses," to use her own charming and prophetic expression—are in a very real sense the continuation of her autobiography. They emit the perfume of her delicate sympathy, her perpetual gaiety, her love so passionately beautiful for Jesus and Mary—like a riot of roses in June. And if it be asked when the autobiography will be complete, the answer is—to quote the "little Queen" herself—that boundless as were her desires to labour for God, those desires are to be infinitely surpassed; that He will refuse nothing in Paradise to her who refused Him nothing on earth; that she will continue her work from Heaven until the last soul has entered its gates. And, therefore, "of her reign there shall be no end."

One of the deliberate objects of certain miracles was to procure her own canonisation, and thus to have more power "to win love for her Beloved." The unknown desired to become known. The writer can recall the apathy of Lisieux when he visited her grave in 1903. Twenty years later, in 1923, its mayor demanded, happily in vain, the sum of six million francs before he would allow her remains to be exhumed. The writer remembers also the graphic account given him at Carfin by the Vice-Postulator, Mgr. de Teil, of the difficulties which he and the beloved sisters of the Saint had to contend with—especially regarding the "little way"—and of the miracles which broke down the stubborn opposition against the placing of the Little Flower of Jesus on the Altars of the Church.[1]

"I knew," said the Vice-Postulator, "that any Carmelite Cause was hopeless in Rome. The Congregation of Rites was weary of Causes in which it was easy to prove that virtue had been heroically practised, but where authenticated cures were invariably wanting.

[1] The story of his appointment is as follows. Early in the summer of 1908, Sœur Marie Ange—Sister Mary of St. Angelus of the Child Jesus—whom the writer of these lines knew when she was yet a novice, became Prioress of the Carmel of Lisieux. Though a child of Catholic Brittany, she was as fond of the world as she was contemptuous of nuns until she read *The Story of a Soul.* Entering the Carmel of her "conqueror"—as she named her—she grew so rapidly in perfection that despite her youth she was chosen Prioress in succession to the "little mother" of Saint Thérèse, whose term of office had expired.

It was Mother Marie Ange who in that same year, 1908, prevailed upon the new Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, Mgr. Lemonnier—still, 1927, in charge of Bayeux—to submit the Cause of the Little Flower to the Holy See. Shortly afterwards, at the beginning of 1909, these two, with Mother Agnes of Jesus ("Pauline"), selected the Vice-Postulator of the martyred Carmelites of Compiègne, Mgr. de Teil, for the same office on behalf of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Though of the diocese of Poitiers, the Monsignor was attached to that of Paris. As if her work was now complete the youthful Prioress, victim of pulmonary consumption, died a most holy death on November 11, 1909.

That same year the writer met Mgr. de Teil for the first time. In February, 1910, the first authorisation came from the Congregation of Rites, and the Cause went forward with lightning rapidity, due in no small measure to the sagacity, prudence, and exquisite courtesy of the indefatigable Vice-Postulator. On May 20, 1922, he died of a stroke, in Paris, holding in his hand the picture of her whom he had so faithfully served. *Requiescant!* [ED.]

The last canonisation of a Carmelite happened centuries ago. But I saw from the outset that in this case matters were different, so after my appointment I gathered together the medical testimony on behalf of several outstanding cures attributed to the intercession of Sœur Thérèse. Taking the documents to Rome I submitted them to the officials of the Sacred Congregation. 'Well, at last,' they exclaimed, 'we have something substantial. These only require the episcopal signature.'"

"A Process," continued the Monsignor, "is a costly affair. The two most important factors in a canonisation are money and miracles. Sœur Thérèse is providing us plentifully with both!"

"I take to myself," he added with a smile, "some responsibility in the matter. I was Vice-Postulator for the martyred Carmelites of Compiègne, whose martyrdom made the Process of Beatification comparatively easy—miracles not being strictly required. After the Beatification I gave a series of lectures in various Carmels of France on the martyrs, begging at the same time for prayers that miracles might be forthcoming to assist the work of canonisation. One of the lectures was delivered in the Carmel of Lisieux, and *Sœur Thérèse was present*, though, of course, I did not know her. 'If any of you who are listening to me,' I said at the conclusion, 'have the intention of being canonised, please have pity on the poor Vice-Postulator and work plenty of miracles!' And Sœur Thérèse, obedient child, did precisely as she was told."

The British Isles and St. Thérèse

It was through the translation of *The Story of a Soul*, by Professor Dziewicki of Prague, in 1900, that the aroma of the Little Flower was first spread through all English-speaking lands. The former edition of *Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*, published in 1912, and nine times

reprinted, contained a chapter upon the Roses of the Saint. These accounts of her favours served to make her wonderful power with her Divine Spouse more widely known and invoked. Several of these Roses had fallen on Great Britain and Ireland. For obvious reasons they are almost all omitted in this, the second edition of the volume. Later the Roses of both editions will appear in a separate book.

Reference must nevertheless be made to three Roses, already in print, but valuable in the history of the devotion in these countries. The first was the cure of a young Good Shepherd postulant in London, whose foot was badly hurt. This took place on November 8, 1908. On that occasion the Little Flower kept her promise of "coming down to earth," so that the incident caused a sensation, and was widely advertised. The result was that in Glasgow, to which city the girl belonged, 450 favours were acknowledged in the Catholic press in the space of a year. On August 27, 1910, a much more striking Rose, which became known far and near, was the healing of Mrs. Dorans, in Glasgow, when almost at the point of death from a cancerous tumour. In this case also the Little Flower betrayed her presence.

Finally, on April 21, 1911, the writer had the great joy of giving Holy Communion to Mr. Alexander Grant, formerly United Free Minister of Lochranza, in Arran, the first clergyman of the Free Church of Scotland to cross over to Rome. He had been baptised the evening before by Father Widdowson, S.J. On May 21, together with his wife, already a convert, he left Edinburgh to take charge in Alençon of the house where the Little Flower first saw the light of day. A long account of the conversion, written by Mr. Grant to Mother Agnes, appeared in the first edition of this volume. Until his death, in 1917, its author attributed the grace of faith to the extraordinary influence of the little Queen. His devoted wife still keeps watch

and ward (1927) over the sacred spot, itself a much frequented place of pilgrimage, where already is rising a tiny chapel for the convenience of pilgrims to her shrine.

From Canterbury to Rome

England's Cardinal, it must be remembered, wrote the Preface to the first edition of this volume, and, moreover, accorded to its readers the almost unique privilege of an indulgence. He attended the canonisation ceremony in Rome and the celebrations in Lisieux. For the Little Flower is deeply loved in the land where once lived St. Simon Stock, to whom Our Lady revealed the scapular of Mount Carmel. Of the Roses forwarded to the convent in Lisieux from St. Thérèse's English garden, two are chosen for publication here. They are of interest to all who are concerned—as she has shown herself to be—in the return of this people to the Faith of its Fathers.

England.
July 21, 1924.

I belonged to a branch of the Anglican Church which was very near in doctrine to the Catholic Church. The infallibility of the Pope was the only Catholic dogma which seemed to me inadmissible. For six years I studied the arguments for and against that article of Faith, but I never could find more than a momentary satisfaction. Presently error would recover its sway and plunge me back into uncertainty.

In the autumn of 1923 I bought the book called *A Little White Flower*. It made a profound impression on me. I felt near me the presence of Blessed Thérèse, and there grew up between us so close a friendship that we really were like two sisters. But, alas! there was one cloud that darkened my happiness—the soul of Thérèse and my soul were not united in faith.

During the course of November I asked the prayers of the Carmel of Lisieux, and received from them a relic of the Little Flower. I was delighted, and thinking our Anglican Vicar would be interested, I brought him my treasure. I shall never forget his scorn of my "superstition." I was extremely hurt,

and conceived a strong aversion for the Anglican Church, whose teaching all at once seemed to me doubtful and capricious. "Is your faith dead, then?" said the Vicar, pointing to the relic. He spoke better than he knew. Where there was no place for Thérèse, there was no place for me, and since the religion of my birth rejected her, I, too, would be a Catholic.

Little by little my dear Saint completed her task. She led me to a priest of her choice, one of her fervent clients. I studied the truths of the Catholic Church, and during the period of preparation I strove with special energy to enter into Thérèse's "little way" of spiritual abandonment. In her school, a child once more, I no longer made objections; I embraced all those things which had so long offended me in the days of my foolish pride.

On May 28, 1924, I was baptised, receiving the name of Marie Thérèse. On the following day, the feast of the Ascension, I made my First Communion. My soul enjoyed unutterable peace. Henceforth nothing can ever separate me from my heavenly friend. Her sure hand will guide me always, and I take delight in repeating to her the words of Ruth to Noemi: "Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go: and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

A Grateful Client.

"Out of the Pit and the Mire"

The following letter to the Carmel of Lisieux, from a writer who wishes to remain anonymous, shows that St. Thérèse does not limit her Roses to those of the household of the faith. It is dated July 14, 1924.

The Little Flower of Jesus has deigned to stoop towards me, though I am a member of the Anglican Church, and I must publish in her praise that she has drawn me back from the brink of hell.

I always had at heart a sincere love of God, but the demon of impurity took possession of me from my early childhood. What a martyrdom this grievous struggle was to me for more than sixteen years! I shudder yet when I think of the innumerable defilements with which I sullied my soul. I tried to resist the evil, but so strong was the grip it had upon me, that I always fell back again. Finally my Anglo-Catholic

confessor, weary of so much wickedness, ended by refusing to direct me any longer, and this abandonment of my soul plunged me into frightful despair.

It was then I made up my mind to read the Life of Blessed Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Bitter were the tears I shed when I first came in contact with the "Little White Flower." What a contrast between the spotless purity of her soul and the utter vileness of mine! So powerful was the impression made upon me, that I became ill through very remorse. I threw myself upon my knees and begged our Saviour to have pity on me. "Only a miracle can save me," I cried, "for I have promised, oh! so many times, to resist temptation, but I have never succeeded. O my God, send to my aid your "little Thérèse." And then immediately I felt beside me a mysterious presence, and I heard the sweet voice of the "Little Flower" whisper in my ear: "See what divine grace has done for me. It will do as much for you, if you are faithful to it." "O Saint of God," I replied, "I am at the end of my strength; if you would save me, you must fight with me and for me." And the voice from heaven replied: "I will do so. I will aid you with all my power."

For several days I had the happiness of feeling the sensible presence and continual assistance of the sweet Saint, and I spent my time entirely in her company. My wretchedness had been changed into joy, when there occurred one of those occasions of sin, which up till that time I had never been able to resist. Just as I was on the point of giving way, I turned to her for help. "O Thérèse," I prayed, "save me in spite of myself." . . . Then I conquered.

Instantly the devil took to flight. Nine months have passed since that day, and Thérèse has kept her promise.

Is it any wonder, then, that I love her beyond measure? If she delights to be the "Little Flower of Jesus," may she permit me, in spite of my unworthiness, to be the "little flower of Thérèse," that she may nurse me in her garden for the God of infinite mercy.

Irish Roses

No one who has travelled through Ireland, and visited the homes of its people, but has been struck with the universal devotion of its priests and nuns, its old folk, its busy men and women, its youngest children, to the

Saint of Lisieux. In the humblest cottage, in the overcrowded room, as in statelier dwellings, where the Virgin Mother is, the Flower of Jesus is also to be found. With the ardent faith of the race, the children of St. Patrick have seized the fact that they must love and honour her whom the King has so magnificently glorified. The two stories which follow will prove of deep interest to our readers.

Our Lady Appears with St. Thérèse

In the latest volume of *The Shower of Roses*, published by the Carmel of Lisieux, there appears a much abbreviated account of the following charming story, one more proof of the Little Flower's love for the poor. To that account are appended the signatures of two Dublin priests, who saw the dying child and had relinquished all hope of her recovery. The medical attestation of the disease is also given. The narrative here printed comes from the pen of Professor Patrick Beecher, M.A., D.D., of Maynooth College, Ireland, and was originally written for the Prioress of a Carmel in County Dublin. Dr. Beecher had charge of the translation of part of the above-mentioned volume, and becoming interested in the Dublin "Rose" made a personal and fuller investigation of the facts. According to *The Shower of Roses*, the child fell ill on January 19, 1921, and the cure occurred eight days later, on January 27, 1921. The narrative of the Maynooth professor is dated April 16, 1925, and is set down here in all the simplicity with which it was given to him.

"After a long search I traced the family—Mrs. Fitchett, her daughter Laura, and Miss Hennessy, sister to Mrs. Fitchett. They are very poor, and live in a single room next to the Holy Faith Convent in Strand Street. I got the following facts, respectively, from Mrs. Fitchett, Miss Hennessy, and Laura:

Mrs. Fitchett:

"Laura was suffering from kidney trouble (acute nephritis) and dropsy, and her body was swollen to twice its normal size; for six weeks she had taken no solid food. The doctor (Dr. Garland) said there was absolutely no hope. For three days she was unconscious, and she was anointed for death, as there was no hope from medicine. I prayed to Blessed Thérèse, and not only prayed, but cried to her. Still the child became worse, and had all the appearance of death. I was standing beside the bed with my sister and two brothers. We could feel no pulse, and we came to the conclusion that she was dead. One of my brothers put a mirror to her mouth, and then said: 'She is not yet dead, as there is moisture on the mirror.' I then felt a stifling feeling, and had to leave the room, as I could not bear to see Laura die, and also I had no holy candles, or other things for the wake. Still, at every step I took I prayed to the Little Flower, and said: 'It is not yet too late; won't you please send one of your heavenly Roses and cure my Laura?' I was out for about three-quarters of an hour, and on my return saw my sister standing at the door. I knew what that meant—Laura was dead. She said: 'I have news for you—Laura is cured.' When I came in Laura was sitting up in bed, and said: 'Mother, I am cured; get me my clothes, I want to get up, and I'm starved with hunger.' I was afraid to let her get up, and made her stay in bed until the following day, but she appeared perfectly well and was craving every half-hour for food. I didn't want to give her as much as would satisfy her, as she had been so long without solid food."

Miss Hennessy:

"We were around the bed, just as my sister has described, waiting for Laura's death. My sister here had gone out, and there remained my two brothers and myself. Laura had all the appearance of death, but suddenly a thrill passed through her, and she sat up in bed, joined her hands and said three *Hail Marys* aloud, and bowed her head profoundly at the Holy Name. She then stared at the other side of the bed away from us, and we knew that she was gazing at some invisible person, because her eyes were bright and her whole face was beaming, and she was drawn in that direction. One of my brothers spoke to her, but I beckoned to him to keep quiet. Next she reached out her hand, apparently in the act of shaking hands, and followed with her eyes half-way

around the bed. Not only did she follow with her eyes, but she was drawn in that direction, and her face was beaming."

"Coming now to Laura's own account of the incident, I should first of all say that she is a very mild little girl, with a frank, open face, very shy, and apparently incapable of inventing a story. She was then thirteen years of age, and is now seventeen years. She is not an intelligent child, and the mother says 'she never could manage sums when at school.' I impressed on Laura (as indeed on the mother and aunt too) the great wrong of saying anything that did not really happen. They understood that perfectly.

Laura said:

"Blessed Teresa appeared beside the bed and the Blessed Virgin was beside her. She said: 'Sit up, Laura, and say three *Hail Marys* in honour of the Blessed Virgin.' Then she said: 'Bow to the Blessed Virgin,' and I bowed. She had a lovely white silk bag on her left arm, and she opened it and took out a large white rose and put it to my nose to smell, and then put it back again. Then she shook hands with me, and said: 'Good-bye now, Laura, you are cured.' Then they both walked around the bed, and when they came to that spot I couldn't see them any longer."

"I cross-examined the child most carefully, looking not only for the reply, but for the way it was given, and it was that of one who had seen with her eyes.

"Did the Blessed Virgin say anything to you?"

"No, but she smiled when I bowed to her."

"What did she look like?"

"She had a blue mantle, but she didn't have any crown."

"Of course, Laura, this was all a dream."

"Oh, no, no! It was no dream, I saw her."

"Well, what happened was this. You were delirious, and you fancied that she came out of that picture on the wall." [This picture represented St. Thérèse as a nun.]

"Oh, no, I wasn't. And she was not like any picture I ever saw."

"What was she like?"

"A little girl in First Communion dress, with a white wreath on her head, and she had curls, and a white silk bag on her left arm."

"Did you really feel her hand when she shook hands with you?"

"Yes, I did."

"I may add that the mother tells me Laura is constantly speaking of the lovely white hands of the Little Flower.

"The fact remains that Laura was instantly cured, and has never been ill since.

"P. A. Beecher."

"Will she think of Poor Donegal?"

Glenties,
Donegal.
April 12, 1913.

Dear Rev. Father,—Your letter was sent on to me here. The facts concerning the extraordinary cure of my wife are as follows:

She was in indifferent health for nearly three years, and on January 24 last she gave birth to a child, which two days later, according to promise, received the name of Mary Frances Teresa. However, puerperal fever set in, and finally—it was two a.m. on the morning of the 27th—three doctors and the priest thought it was all over. She lingered on till the forenoon.

We were making, as you know, a novena to the Little Flower, and more than once the remark was passed: "She is so busy, I wonder if she will think of poor Donegal!" Evidently she did think of it, and she "came down," as she promised to do, and comforted us all.

About eleven o'clock my little Kathleen, a child of four years, who had promised to make her First Communion in honour of Sister Thérèse if her mother was cured, came into the house with a bunch of most lovely snowdrops. There were exactly six. She said a nun had given them, and had told her to take them to father for mamma, and mamma would be cured. The flowers were put in water, but nothing was thought of the "nun" until after a time the room, and even the whole house, began to be filled with a strange, sweet perfume. Snowdrops,

of course, have no perfume. However, we traced it to the flowers, and then investigated the child's story.

The nun, according to the little one, came down from the skies and put the flowers in her hand, adding the above message for my dying wife. It seems the apparition was dressed in white; the child also noticed the beauty of the face and of the hands, and how quickly she "flew away" when she had delivered her message. I may add that there were no nuns in the neighbourhood, and no snowdrops either.

Thank God! my wife recovered promptly. One of the doctors has certified that it was an incurable case of infectious septicæmia, but that she now enjoys *better health* than she has done for two years. After a most careful enquiry we are all convinced the child's statement was perfectly correct. The flowers retained their wonderful scent for the space of a week. One of the doctors carried off two of them to a friend who was very ill, and they perfumed that house also.

I hope her "visit" to Donegal will make the little Saint more loved than ever. What a gracious way she has of "doing good upon earth."

Yours very sincerely,

MICHAEL M'NELIS, J.P.

THE SALVING OF THE *LAVEROCK*

The following Rose comes from Scotland—the first of the English-speaking nations to rally to the banner of the little Queen. The favour seems to have been granted to show the power of simple, trusting, childlike faith.

Some years ago the good ship *Laverock*, on its trial trip from London to Glasgow, foundered off the Ayrshire coast not far from Largs. It was decided that she must at all costs be salved, and preparations were accordingly made. Salvaging is an expensive affair, involving not only divers and tugs, but the services of hundreds of men. As the vessel belonged to the British Navy, a Government official was sent to superintend operations, and Mr. Fisher, a Greenock stevedore, was given the contract. In spite of the efforts

made, and the thousands of pounds expended, the *Laverock* refused to quit her moorings at the bottom of the Clyde. At that time there lived at the Franciscan Convent, in Greenock, a devoted apostle of St. Thérèse, Sister Mary Felicitas, since gone to her reward. It chanced that one day Mr. Fisher, meeting the good nun, told her of his task, and how so far it had proved hopeless. She smiled, and handing him a medal of the Little Flower bade him throw it in the water and the boat would come up. Mr. Fisher smiled in his turn, but not to hurt his friend accepted the medal. Nevertheless he decided that he would not throw it in the Clyde, since boats could not be fished out of the water in that fashion, and if they failed to salvage it Sister Mary Felicitas would be sorely disappointed. So the medal remained in his pocket.

Money was poured out, but the *Laverock* lay obstinately in the bed of the river. Presently a high tide became due, and for this every effort was put forth, and fresh money spent. The day and the tide arrived. Anxiously Mr. Fisher and the superintendent watched the operations. At last the high-water mark was reached, and still the *Laverock* slept peacefully in the mud below. Then the tide went down. When it had lowered by half a foot the superintendent sent for Mr. Fisher, and bewailing their ill-luck bade him take the steam-launch ashore, and arrange for the trains to convey the men to their various destinations. All idea of floating the wreck was abandoned and the men made ready to return home. They would have to wait another day.

As Mr. Fisher crossed the deck, taking from his pocket the little medal he congratulated himself on not having cast it into the water, seeing how futile their efforts had been. Had he done so, Sister Mary Felicitas would of a surety have been grievously disappointed. Descending the ship's ladder into the launch, the precious medal slipped out of his hand and fell into the sea. He

felt sorry, but there was nothing to be done, so he went his way. But not for long. Scarcely had they proceeded some fifty yards, when there came from the vessel he had just left a vigorous shout. It was a call to come back, as the sunken wreck was rising from the bottom of the firth. They headed the boat round, and Mr. Fisher ran up the ladder, reaching the deck in time to see the vessel emerge from the waves. That night it proceeded on its voyage.

Next day the *Greenock Telegraph* announced the salvage of the *Laverock*, referring to the strange fact that when the tide went down, the good ship came up. But there were two people in Greenock for whom the mystery was no mystery—a Catholic stevedore and a humble Franciscan nun.

The writer tells the story as Mr. Fisher told it on a pilgrimage to the Little Flower's shrine at Carfin, and he vouches for its truth. The saving of one sinner—and she has converted many—is to her a much mightier task than the salving of a fleet.

The Roses of Carfin

Few of the Roses which have fallen from the hands of St. Thérèse have revealed more fully to the English-speaking world her own queenly sway over hearts, and her determination to draw souls to Mary and to Christ, than the shower she has let fall on the Scottish village of Carfin.[1]

The village, which borrowed its name some seventy years ago from a neighbouring mansion, lies on one of

[1] "The Introduction to *A Little White Flower*, from Father Taylor's pen, is admirably done, with modest reticence as regards Carfin, about which Christendom at large would be willing to hear a great deal more" (*Tablet*, November 13, 1926).

These words of the *Tablet* reviewer are here quoted as the author's apology for referring at such length to the story of Carfin.—[Ed.]

the uplands of Lanarkshire. In mediæval days two wells dedicated to Our Lady were in close proximity. A colony of Catholic miners, mainly Irish, partly Lithuanian, settled there, so that Carfin has always been loyal to the ancient faith. It is of interest that the memorials of that faith with which the surrounding country teems, are in part as old as the Roman roads and bridges and camps close by. Between Carfin and the Clyde is to be found St. Patrick's well, and a Protestant historian has conjectured that the future apostle of Erin may have made his way hither from his native Dunbritton, the modern Dumbarton, travelling by the river-bank to the Roman fort at Dalziel, the Motherwell of to-day.

In the vicinity of the village long years ago, St. Nethan, friend of St. Columba, preached the Gospel. As the centuries passed, the Celtic monks gradually disappeared. The Roman monks came, and Scotland's hills and vales were studded with churches that sheltered a thousand invisible fires. Then the dark shadow of Calvinism settled upon the land; the monks were turned adrift, and only a few red embers were left of the great Eucharistic flames. Monkland, but a short distance away, reminds us even now of those glorious days. About five hundred yards from Carfin stood one of those temples to Christ, built in honour of His Mother, built near a well that still bears her blessed name, though the water comes there no more. Empty, too, is her well in Motherwell—empty, desecrated, and disowned.

A small Grotto, begun by the villagers in September, 1920, was opened on Rosary Sunday, 1922. Before long a modest shrine of the "little Thérèse" was added to the large one of Our Lady of Lourdes. To the folk of Carfin and the immediate vicinity the Grotto became a quiet haven of prayer and of peace. But on a memorable day it happened that the presence of the Little Flower was challenged, as if she were a rival

that would rob the Immaculate Queen of her rightful glory. The challenge was submitted to her sisters in the Carmel of Lisieux, who, in indignation, promised that their Thérèse would accept it, and would prove her passionate loyalty to Mary by drawing a multitude of souls to the shrine. The promise passed into a prophecy, for in less than three months a quarter of a million of pilgrims had wended their way to Our Lady of Carfin. Strange to say, the secular Press vied with the Catholic papers in advertising her new sanctuary.

It was on the eve of the beatification of Sœur Thérèse that the challenge was conveyed to the Carmel. Doubtless the generous answer was connected with that event just as so many other favours have been the consequence of her canonisation. But there was an unexpected sequel, and this time the challenge was to her Spouse, the Son of Mary, and the Eucharistic King. From 1916 He had been borne in procession through the presbytery grounds, and from 1920, around the garlanded and richly bedecked village, a transformed Carfin, till Corpus Christi had become a red-letter day for all the country-side. The marvellous demonstration of Catholic faith during the summer and autumn of 1923, following on the promise of the Carmel and the glorification of the Little Flower, had, however, awakened animosity in one influential quarter. The result was the resuscitation of an obsolete penal law in the June of 1924 to prevent the public procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The same law had been invoked against a similar procession on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress at Westminster, 1908. Whatever trouble a procession might have caused that day in London, everyone knew there was no danger at Carfin. The procession took place in the Grotto grounds instead, but an agitation was at once set on foot to have the iniquitous law—and laws—repealed. Once more, this time in the British House of Commons, and indeed in the world-wide Press, the "little Queen" advertised the Grotto and its Madonna.

Nor did she let the matter rest there. Two years and a half went by, and appropriately on December 15, 1926, the octave day of the Immaculate Conception, thanks to the efforts of many friends, but largely through those of Mr. F. N. Blundell, M.P., and Mr. Dennis Herbert, M.P., with three exceptions, the long list of disgraceful enactments was removed from the statute book of the realm.[1]

In 1925, immediately following the great pageant in St. Peter's on May 17, there was erected in the Grotto on Pentecost Sunday the magnificent marble statue of the new Saint on an imposing pedestal surrounded by rose trees.

Readers will have seen in the Prologue to this volume how a little later, on the third anniversary of the Carfin shrine, which was also Rosary Day and Little Flower Sunday, some 30,000 clients forgathered to do homage to the Madonna and her wonderful daughter.

[1] "The Roman Catholic Relief Bill," says the *Universe* of December 10, 1926, "had its origin in the abandonment of a procession of the Blessed Sacrament at Carfin, the 'Scottish Lourdes,' on June 27, 1924. The police intimated that if it were held in the public streets the vested clergy would be liable to a fine of £50 each. Father Taylor stated that the matter would not be allowed to rest." The *Universe* then tells how the Labour Members of Parliament began the protest against the action of the police, Mr. Blundell, the well-known Catholic Conservative, lending them his strong support. The new Emancipation Bill was introduced first by Mr. Blundell, then later by a non-Catholic, Mr. Dennis Herbert. It is not generally known that the influence of Cardinal Bourne with the British Cabinet played a very large part in the success of the endeavour.

"The passing of this measure," says the *Columba* of January, 1927, "while of great importance to all Catholics, is of special interest to members of the Knights of St. Columba. The Bill owes its origin to the banning of the Corpus Christi procession at Carfin, Lanarkshire, in 1924. Following the action of the authorities in suppressing the public procession, the parish priest, the Rev. T. N. Taylor, took immediate action to have the matter raised in the House of Commons. At his request the editor of *Columba* got into touch with Brother F. N. Blundell, M.P., then Grand Knight of Ormskirk Council, and others, with the ultimate result that a Bill was framed by Mr. Blundell, and the work now happily completed was begun. We feel honoured that the Order was associated with Father Taylor in his task, and the whole Catholic world is indebted to Brother Blundell, Mr. Dennis Herbert, and Sir Henry Slesser, for the repeal of the obnoxious laws."

When his case was won, Mr. Blundell wrote to Carfin, to thank the pilgrims of Our Lady and St. Thérèse for the prayers which had aided him to render wellnigh complete the task of his illustrious predecessor, Daniel O'Connell.—[Ed.]

Splendid as was the scene, not even the most sanguine of those clients could have anticipated how St. Thérèse would reward their affectionate faith by the splendour of the fourth anniversary, October 3, 1926.

The great coal dispute of Britain had supervened, and an army of miners made use of their leisure to continue their work at the shrine. St. Mary's, Cleland, came to the help of Carfin. On Little Flower Sunday, through avenue after avenue tastefully laid out by the voluntary toilers, there marched at the close of the daylight proceedings a torchlight procession, nearly two miles in length. The river of light was quite comparable in beauty to that in Lourdes when, at Assumptiontide, all France goes to greet the Madonna. In the waters of the new lake of St. Mary shone the white, red, and gold of a myriad lamps. To the rose-garden of the Angel of Lisieux, flanked with its tall Venetian masts; to the chapel of the Crucified which Cardinal Bourne, her devoted advocate, had blessed; and to the original sanctuary of Mary and Bernadette, there was now added a new and exquisite shrine, likewise the handiwork of the miners. It was dedicated that day to the little Jesus who is Mary's Child and the Spouse of Thérèse.

Having gone thus far at Carfin in stirring up devotion to her Immaculate Mother, in consoling the sorrowful, and in leading sinners to God, who shall dare to say how far she may not yet go? Who shall set a limit to the conversions which may yet be obtained by her whom the Pope himself has christened a "prodigy of miracles"? Who shall hinder her from gathering recruits for her legion of little victims of Divine Love? One other favour is ardently sought at her hands, for the good of souls and for the coming of her own kingdom, for the glory of Mary, and for the honour of the Eucharistic King. That fragrant Rose is a votive church on Maryknowe, by the side of the Carfin Grotto, which will be a beacon-light of faith in the northern darkness, a power-house of the prayer that moves mountains, and a furnace of the

love of Christ of which her own heart was a fathomless abyss.

The Apparitions at Gallipoli

Of the many tales told at Carfin by Mgr. de Teil two are worthy of narration on account of their influence on the Process. The first has appeared in the abridged Life, *As Little Children*, and in the previous edition of the complete Life, *Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*. It may therefore be briefly dealt with here.

"A friend gave me one day a sum of money to be spent on behalf of Sœur Thérèse, so I set out for Gallipoli, in the extreme south of Italy, in order to visit a Carmel there in which the Servant of God had repeatedly appeared. The Prioress told me of their dire poverty before the apparitions—indeed, on certain days they had to substitute for their dinner a visit to the chapel.

"She also described how at the close of a triduum to Sœur Thérèse, during the night of January 16, 1910, their benefactress brought her 500 *lire* [about £20]; bade her go downstairs and deposit the notes in a cashbox; told her: 'I am the Servant of God, Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux'; and finally, on the Prioress remarking that she might lose her way, made answer in the significant words—significant in the light of the criticisms levelled at her 'little way': 'No, no!

MY WAY IS A SURE ONE

and I am not mistaken in following it.'

"From January till August, when friends came to the rescue, the Carmel was mysteriously provided with money, Sœur Thérèse on several occasions bringing it herself. On September 5, 1910, eve of the first exhumation at Lisieux, she appeared again to Mother Carmela, and, informing her of the event of the morrow, said that only her bones would be found, and that through those relics great wonders would be wrought. She also revealed something of her hidden martyrdom in the Carmel of Lisieux.

On January 16, 1911, the Bishop of Nardo sent them a gift of 500 *lire*, enclosing a card with her words: "My way is a sure way." On the sealed envelope being opened, it was found

to contain another 300 *lire*. Mgr. Giannatasio regarded this as confirming his belief that these words referred to her doctrine of spiritual childhood.

"The Prioress told me also how Bishop Müller, of Gallipoli, set up a court of enquiry and appointed as its president the Jesuit Father who was superior of the diocesan seminary. This good priest was perfectly convinced that the whole affair was diabolical. 'It is easy for the devil,' he remarked, 'to play tricks on simple nuns. He may even lead a Bishop astray. But he will not catch a Jesuit napping.' So the community was put through the ordeal of a most terrifying examination, which resulted in the complete discomfiture of the president. His apology was an equally severe retreat, during which he told the nuns how much God expected of them on account of these favours!"

It is worthy of note that the Gallipoli apparitions—duly reported in Rome—coincided with the first steps taken in the Cause of Beatification and to a certain extent influenced its destiny. The Bishop of Nardo was one of the witnesses before the tribunal at Lisieux. Furthermore it was in connection with the Gallipoli incidents that the Saint revealed her wish that her Roses should be published widely. A French Carmelite, on July 20, 1910, was narrating them in a letter to a nun in Belgium, but forgot the name of the Italian town. Having made an appeal to "little Thérèse," she heard a sweet voice say: "Gallipoli." Then the voice continued: "That is just what you must do. I desire so much to do good.

YOU MUST MAKE ME KNOWN EVERYWHERE."

The second of the tales alluded to above had a still more considerable effect upon the Cause.

"One day," said Mgr. de Teil, "warning reached me that the Process of Beatification was in serious peril in Rome itself. I set off that night for the Eternal City and duly waited upon the secretary of the Congregation of Rites, Mgr. La Fontaine [now Cardinal Patriarch of Venice]. I met with a frigid reception and was informed that far too much fuss was being

made of this young Carmelite nun. Unless it were to cease the Cause would be suspended. 'Well, what can we do?' I said to the secretary, who was noted for his insistence on a rigid adherence to the rules of the Congregation. 'We can cease our own efforts, but how are we to hinder Sœur Thérèse from advertising herself?' 'The fuss must stop,' repeated the secretary, still looking very grave. 'Listen, then,' answered the Vice-Postulator, 'to one account of how she does the advertising, and judge for yourself.'"

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

Mgr. de Teil then told the story of the wonderful catch of fish near Recanati, on the Adriatic, not far from Ancona and the famous Loreto. The Father Guardian of the Basilica there vouches for its authenticity in the volume of the *Shower of Roses* in which it is published.

Recanati, a fishing village, was on the verge of starvation, as the fishing season had been a failure. Lancelot, cook on one of the boats, was lamenting his fate to his wife, Agatha. She dearly loved the Little Flower, and, putting a picture of the Saint into one of his pockets, told him to ask her for aid. At first he ridiculed the idea, but finally communicated the message to the captain, and that night's expedition was recommended to the "little nun." Lancelot went so far as to ask her for a sturgeon—a fish never found in those waters. He himself had not seen one in fifty-three years.

Arrived at their station the nets were let down, and to the utter astonishment of the fishermen they were immediately filled. The capture included also a magnificent sturgeon weighing over a hundred pounds. The men, overjoyed, hoisted the national flag in accordance with an old custom, and set sail for Recanati. The other vessels, which had caught nothing, followed the lucky one into the harbour. The sight of the wonderful catch caused the greatest excitement, not only among the sailors, but among their wives and families,

and on every side there was an insistent demand for pictures of the "santina."

"From that day to this," concluded the Vice-Postulator, speaking to the erstwhile grave secretary, "no one dared say a word at Recanati against Sœur Thérèse." Telling the story at Carfin, he added: "It was good to see the change that came over the secretary's countenance as I told him my tale. I should like to have had a cinematograph for the occasion! Scarcely had I finished when he begged with much eagerness that I would do him the kindness of writing to Lisieux, to the sisters of Sœur Thérèse, and solicit their intercession with the 'santina' for a favour he urgently desired.

"Needless to say, I consented, and I wrote to Mother Agnes of Jesus ['Pauline'] asking her to pray as never yet she had prayed, since the whole Cause was at stake. A day or two later Mgr. La Fontaine called upon me, his face beaming with smiles. The Rose had fallen, and thenceforward there was no more question in Rome of too much fuss about Sœur Thérèse."

One other story told by the Vice-Postulator at Carfin deserves to be recorded here. It concerns the Catholic University of Paris and its present Rector, Mgr. Baudrillart—the brilliant Professor of mediæval history in the days when the present writer was a humble student within its walls. During a large part of its career the University suffered from lack of funds, and the new Rector was soon made to feel the need of financial help.

"I want 10,000 francs to pay this account," said the secretary to him one day. "There are not ten francs in the Bank," answered the harassed Monsignor. "Sooner or later it will have to be met," insisted the secretary, "and the sooner the better!" Weary of the continual struggle for very existence Bishop Baudrillart put on his hat and, going out, entered a church close by. "Lord," was his prayer, "You have given me a heavy burden to carry, and I know You Yourself can provide me with all the help I need. Yet sometimes You like to be asked in the name of Your friends. Well, in the name

of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, give me 10,000 francs!" The Rector returned home, to find a gentleman awaiting him in the parlour, who handed him a donation of . . . 10,000 francs!

Bewildered by the suddenness of the answer to his prayer, the Rector could scarcely find words to thank the benefactor, and when the latter had gone, he hastened forth again, this time to communicate the good news to his friend Mgr. de Teil—the apostle of the Servant of God—who lived only a short distance away.

"10,000 francs?" said the Vice-Postulator. "Is that all? She will do much more than that for you, if she takes you under her protection." The Rector went back to his rooms rejoicing. That afternoon he was again called to the parlour, to receive from another benefactor a gift of 30,000 francs! Next morning there was a summons to an hotel in the neighbourhood. This time it was a lady who sought an interview. She wanted to know about the University, and if the writings of Le Play on Social Economy were held in esteem, also whether Modernism was taught in its Chairs. Satisfied on these various points, she assured him of her interest in his work . . . and would his Lordship kindly accept the little donation of 150,000 francs!

The "little donation" saved the University, and at the Canonisation festivities in Lisieux, Mgr. Baudrillart paid his tribute of thanks to the "little Queen" who, in the hour of his dire distress, had so promptly, so munificently come to his aid.

Thus far the devoted Mgr. de Teil. So well did the Saint advertise herself by her display of power during the war that the Holy Father abrogated the strict rule of the Sacred Congregation which forbids medals to be struck of a Servant of God until after the Beatification. The exception was made on account of the marvellous devotion on the various fronts to the new Joan of Arc. Soldiers from Great Britain, Ireland, and America vied

with those of France, Belgium, Italy, even Germany and Austria, in having recourse to her protection. The many hundreds of military decorations gifted to adorn her shrine prove how effective were those prayers.

Church Saved from Destruction

The most extraordinary intervention of which the writer is cognisant occurred to a Jesuit chaplain, Fr. Campbell. The story has been corroborated by the soldiers under his care. He himself wore her medal at his wrist and attributed to her intercession several hairbreadth escapes. But her chief Rose was the preservation of a church which, though right in the firing-line, he placed under her protection, as he desired to use it for his men. It stood at the cross-roads of a little town in Belgium, its two fine towers a landmark for the German guns. The officers of his mess warned him that it was suicidal for him to enter its doors. Yet for fully two months he used it each day, sometimes twice daily, having as many as 500 men within its walls. No one dared to bivouac in the town. The *curé* and his parishioners had fled six miles to the rear. Three shells had already damaged the sacristy, the pulpit, and the organ. All these he succeeded with her help in having repaired. The houses across the street were laid in dust, the trees around were uprooted or shattered, shell-holes were made again and again in the very path which ran round the House of God, but the Little Flower did not allow a single shell to desecrate the church, and when after two months the Germans retreated, even the Protestant officers of the mess proclaimed its preservation an amazing miracle.

Religious Saved during the War

One more Rose of the war is singled out for notice in these pages on account of the personality of its reicpient—the Right Rev. Abbot Godefroy-Madelaine.

When Prior of the Premonstratensians of Mondaye, Calvados, he gave a retreat to the Carmelites of Lisieux during the life of the Little Flower, and on that account was one of the witnesses in the Process of Beatification. But his chief glory is the important share he took in revealing to the world *The Story of a Soul.* He has himself given a recent account of it in the *Annales de St. Thérèse de Lisieux.*[1]

From Prior at Mondaye, Fr. Godefroy-Madelaine became Abbot of the Premonstratensian Monastery at Frigolet. Thence an iniquitous law compelled him to betake himself to the Abbey of Leffe, near Dinant, in Belgium. When in 1914 the Germans had passed, that picturesque town was a heap of ruins. Hundreds of the neighbouring population were imprisoned in the Abbey on August 23. At nine a.m. some sixty men were taken out and shot mercilessly. An hour later the Abbot was told the place would be set on fire. The religious—each of whom wore a relic of St. Thérèse—begged earnestly that she would aid them. At three o'clock they were threatened with execution, and two lay-brothers who tried to escape were murdered and flung in the Meuse.

It was a night of terror, for the town was burned to ashes, and they could hear the shouts of the drunken soldiery. Next morning a body of Saxons ransacked with great violence the entire convent, crying out that the monks were concealing soldiers and rifles. The Abbot and the Community were insulted and taken

1 Briefly, Sœur Thérèse before her death counselled her sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus, to have the manuscript published. Subsequently Mother Agnes prevailed upon Mother Mary of Gonzaga, the Prioress, to carry out the wishes of the Little Flower. The manuscript was first submitted to Father Godefroy-Madelaine, who warmly approved of the proposal. He undertook to secure the approbation of Mgr. Hugonin, Bishop of Bayeux, the same who had permitted Thérèse Martin to enter Carmel. It is interesting to know that *a first attempt failed,* but returning to the attack he succeeded in securing an *Imprimatur.* What the world might have missed! In October, 1898, the manuscript appeared in print, and was sent to the other Carmels in lieu of the ordinary brief biographical notice forwarded on similar occasions. It spread from the Carmels to their circles of friends, and from those friends to the wide world. [ED.]

away to Marche as prisoners. They had placed in a wooden box, *unlocked*, their vestments and all valuable documents, together with a relic of the Saint. In some miraculous fashion it escaped the notice not only of the soldiers, but of the crowd of prisoners which for six weeks filled the abbey.

Again and again during those weeks of detention they were at the point of death. Again and again when the danger was at its height it would melt away—no one knew how—but all felt that St. Thérèse was with them. Finally a Christian Brother, also interned, suggested a formal novena to the "little Queen," and on the ninth day, September 24, General Berryer came to Marche, where they were imprisoned with the Carmelite Fathers, to announce their innocence and set them free. On November 21 two English novices were imprisoned in Dinant as hostages; on November 28, again through St. Thérèse, they returned to their monastery. Finally, on August 31, twenty-five of the Carmelites of Marche were condemned to be shot at dawn because an old and forgotten rifle was found in their convent. All that night they prepared for death, but promised—if spared—a novena of Masses in thanksgiving for the graces accorded to Sœur Thérèse. In the morning a pardon arrived.

Cardinal Mercier and St. Thérèse

From the outset the love of the Belgians for St. Thérèse was as strong as that of her own Normandy. Its perseverance is evidenced by the train-loads of pilgrims that wend their way to her shrine. While narrating some of the countless favours she has obtained for her Belgian friends, the writer desires to set on record the deep affection of Cardinal Mercier, prince of intellectuals, for that simple cloistered nun.

As long ago as the Easter of 1910 the great Cardinal wrote to the Prioress of the Carmel of Florence:

"No one can read a Life such as that of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus without the soul expanding and without experiencing more keenly the attractions of Divine Love.

"Where can we better follow the divinely triumphant action of the Spirit of God? We see how this innocent child fears to wound God's fatherly heart, how she dedicates herself completely to His service, and becomes a victim for the Church and for souls. We note the unerring judgment that discerns the true from the false, the good from the bad; the strength of will that leads a girl of fifteen to heroic virtue. Always and everywhere true wisdom kept her in union with God, and love for God was her one source of inspiration.

"Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord—these gifts abound in the heart of Thérèse, and through their human tabernacle—translucent as crystal—these marvellous graces shine forth."

As the years passed, his friendship with her own Carmel of Lisieux grew stronger. Many a time he recommended to them his great plans for God's glory. Many a time he told them with joy of the thanksgiving Mass he was about to celebrate, and the prayers he would offer for the community. One of the most beautiful of the precious stones which adorned his chalice was inserted in a ciborium destined for the Carmel. On December 8, 1925, he wrote to Mother Agnes of Jesus:

". . . To-day the doctors tell me that I have a tumour in the stomach. From the depth of my soul I thank God that I have something to offer Him through the hands of my Mother, our Lady of Sorrows, and with all my heart I have said my *Magnificat* in union with that of my Mother in Heaven. From the beginning of my illness I have refused to think of praying for my recovery. I leave myself entirely in the hands of Providence, desiring but one thing only, that God should draw from my poor self all the glory that He can, regardless of the cost. Yet, on the fifteenth of November last, when I was about to give Benediction for the Carmelites of Brussels in honour of your dear little Saint, just as I was crossing the threshold of the church it suddenly occurred to me to have recourse to her. Upon reaching my priedieu, I asked myself whether I ought to pray for my recovery, and, though I did not then know the serious nature of my illness, but was merely

considering the possibility of grave developments, I did not dare to do so. I made a conditional prayer, which was practically an act of abandonment of myself to God. I have a number of works on hand which I should certainly like to carry out for His glory and the good of my clergy; but is not one's sacrifice of such things a better way still of furthering the interests and the glory of God? He has no need of any of us.

"I believe, therefore, that I am right in maintaining my attitude of indifference. But I do not believe I am departing from it in begging you to question your little Saint as to what is best, and asking you to approach her on my behalf."

On December 28 he entered a nursing-home in Brussels, where on the following morning he said his last Mass prior to the operation. "Nothing," they wrote to the Carmel three days later, "can shake the confidence of His Eminence in your dear little Saint. By his side is her relic and her picture. Morning and night he puts them affectionately to his lips, and when I spoke of her, what a smile lit up those powerful eyes! . . . One can never forget the face of a Saint."

The end came on Saturday, January 23. The following note was at once despatched to Mother Agnes of Jesus from the Archbishop's house in Malines:

"His Eminence has just left us to rejoin your little sister. It was the death of a Saint. If Thérèse did not obtain a miraculous cure, she has procured for him something better—a deathbed worth more than a long life. The last days were incomparably beautiful. And if she has not preserved him to us, she has done better. Our beloved Father is in Heaven—a source of grace and strength to his children. She has given us a Saint."

"You must make your Confession"

"There was amongst my parishioners," writes a Belgian priest to the Carmel on September 1, 1926, "an old man of seventy-two years, who was most hostile to religion. For many years I had tried to win his confidence, but without success from the spiritual point of view. This poor man, having been struck down by apoplexy, asked to see me, merely as a friend. His brother, as irreligious as himself, called upon me first, and

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The Shower of Roses

asked me not to administer the last Sacraments to the invalid until after he had lost consciousness. In fact, at each of my visits, he insisted on remaining in the sick-room to prevent me doing so.

"One day the door was by chance left open, and I was able to penetrate unobserved. Finding to my dismay that the patient had had a second stroke more severe than the first, I urged him to think of his soul. His only reply was a torrent of blasphemy.

"After two further attempts, equally fruitless, I recognised my failure, and turning to the dear little Saint of Lisieux, I confided the poor sinner to her care.

"One Sunday morning some time later, just as I was preparing to sing High Mass, I received a message that the patient had met with a third stroke, but still obstinately refused all spiritual help.

"'Thérèse,' I said to our Saint, 'it is now nine o'clock, and the Mass will take a full hour. I cannot go at present to this hardened sinner. Take my place, I beseech you, and say to him repeatedly these words: "*Emile, your soul is not in a fit state to appear before the sovereign Judge; you must make your confession.*"

"It was not until the following day that I was able to visit the invalid. I had built great hopes upon the influence of my heavenly messenger, but, alas! the mere mention of confession evoked the same blasphemies as before. Then, yielding to a sudden inspiration, and putting all my trust in the little Saint, I looked fixedly at the dying man and said: 'My friend, may I ask you a question? Between nine o'clock and ten o'clock yesterday morning, did you not hear a voice saying to you: "Emile, your soul is not in a fit state to appear before the sovereign Judge; you must make your confession"?'

"He looked at me, all amazed. 'How do you know that?' he exclaimed. Then, shaken by sobs, he admitted that, on the day and at the hour I mentioned, a mysterious voice had repeated to him insistently those very words. Completely overcome, he immediately made his confession and received Extreme Unction. In the course of the evening he peacefully expired, full of confidence in the mercy of God."

The Perfume of Roses

"At Lingue, in West Flanders," writes the Rev. J. Van Der Heyden, of Louvain, on September 8, 1926, "there is an

orphan asylum of Our Lady of the Angels, conducted by the Franciscan Sisters. One of these, Sister Mary Michael, had reached the last stages of consumption. Early last May the doctor declared one evening that the sufferer would pass away before morning. That night a loud cry from the sick Sister awoke the whole Community, and on hastening to her cell they found her bathed in tears. 'I saw St. Thérèse over there in that corner,' she exclaimed. 'I shall be cured. I feel it.' Next morning the bedridden invalid rose with the Community, dressed, attended Mass in the village church, and went about her former duties with the orphans as if nothing had been the matter with her. She was indeed completely cured.

"A little later in the same month of May, having received permission to make a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to Lisieux, she brought back with her a small statue of St. Thérèse. This statue she placed on the very spot where, according to herself, the Saint had stood. Before it she placed a vase of roses, and each morning she renewed the flowers.

"One day the Superioress, noticing the strong scent which filled the cell, and fearing it might be harmful to one who had been ill so recently, ordered Sister Mary Michael to discontinue her offering of the roses. Next morning, finding the cell again fragrant with the perfume of roses, she chided the Sister for her disobedience. To her astonishment the latter informed her that the flowers had been removed immediately, and had not been replaced. On further examination the strong fragrance, as of attar of roses, was found to emanate from the statue itself, nor could any reason for its existence be assigned.

"All this happened in May, but though the cure of the invalid had become public at once, the story of the perfume only leaked out a few days ago—no one knows how. Then began a stream of pilgrims from all parts. Through towns and villages the news spread like prairie fire. As it was impossible to admit such crowds to the small cell, the statue was removed and placed in the hall. Within a few minutes all trace of the perfume had disappeared. It was again placed where the apparition had stood. The perfume of roses returned. Various other positions were tried, but all to no purpose. It was, therefore, left in the cell of Sister Mary Michael, on the spot that had been hallowed by the presence of St. Thérèse. More than 15,000 people testify to having perceived the fragrance, so that its existence is beyond doubt."

The Shower of Roses

The Little Flower and the Missions

Readers of the autobiography know how dear to its author was the conversion of heathendom. The fearful vision of Christ being robbed of the souls He loved grieved her to the heart. Before she died she had promised that after her death she would visit the Missions, and, as the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith testify, the year 1898 saw a wave of conversion pass over the pagan world, whole villages presenting themselves for baptism. Not even a tithe of her conquests are known. She has let her "Roses" fall on the Holy Childhood Society in Europe and America by multiplying marvellously its income, and in India and China by the innumerable little souls her intercession has brought to the baptismal font. "I want fifty baptisms to-day, little Thérèse," said a baptising nurse, and the fiftieth dying child was found as she returned to the convent gate. Her name has been given to many thousands of pagan children. Again it was she who caused Mgr. de Teil to become the Society's Director General.

Her interest in missionaries was anterior to her death. Mother Agnes of Jesus had assigned to her, in 1895, as spiritual brother a young seminarist, Abbé Bellière, of the White Fathers, founded by Mgr. Lavigerie for the conversion of Africa. Some of the most touching thoughts of the Saint occur in the correspondence of those two years. She wrote to him in February, 1897: ". . . All I desire is God's holy will, and if in Heaven I could no longer work for His glory, I should prefer exile to home. . . . I do not know the future. But if Jesus realises my presentiments I promise to remain your little sister in Heaven. Our union, far from being sundered, will become more intimate still. There will be no enclosure then, no grating, and my soul will be able to fly to you in the mission-field afar. Our tasks will remain the same. You will fight with the weapons

of the apostle—prayer and love will be mine." Not only did she write to this first brother both in the seminary and in the burning African wilderness, but in the following year Mother Mary of Gonzaga assigned to her spiritual charge Fr. Roulland, a newly ordained priest of the Society of the Foreign Missions of Paris. She spoke to her new brother after his Mass in the Carmel, and followed him with her prayers, sacrifices, and inspiring letters to Su-Tchuen, in China, the land where she herself had hoped to go.[1]

With her prayers she still follows the missionaries to wellnigh every coast, while every missionary from the Rue du Bac and many from elsewhere go to Lisieux to ask her blessing on their journey. Fr. Roulland witnessed during the Process to her influence in India, China and Japan. The literature of other missionary societies, ancient or modern, bears the same testimony. Fr. Blowick of the Irish Mission to China admitted to the writer that a large portion of its income came through her influence. Fr. Walsh, Superior of Maryknoll, the American Mission, wrote to him the other day: "You will be interested to learn that this year we are pushing vocations, and will do so under the united patronage of the Little Flower and Blessed Théophane Vénard." Rome has installed her protectress of the Society for multiplying native priests, a project intensely dear to Pius XI, who has just consecrated six Chinese bishops. In all the native seminaries she is cordially invoked. The Holy Father recommends her intercession repeatedly to missionary bishops, telling them how powerful he himself has found it to be.

She cured in 1909 Mgr. Augouard, the great Bishop

[1] After twelve years in China, Fr. Roulland returned to Paris as Procurator of the Society. There the writer met him in the famous seminary of the Rue du Bac, where repose the relics of Blessed Théophane Vénard, so dear to our Saint. Fr. Roulland possesses a pall painted by her. On it a dove, representing Thérèse herself, is perched on the furthermost rock of a headland jutting out into the ocean. In the distance a white-sailed boat carries her missionary brother to her beloved land of China. [Ed.]

of the Congo, together with one of his missionaries. One of the stained-glass windows at the shrine of the Little Flower depicts her appearing to a missionary at the point of death, and assuring him he would not die, for souls had need of him. He instantly recovered.

Mother Kevin, the well-known missionary nun of Uganda, admitted to the writer that through the influence of St. Thérèse she had collected over £20,000 for her hospitals and convents of native Sisters.

It is the same banker who provides the financial aid required for the work among the Esquimaux, and the missionaries there call her the Queen of Alaska.

In 1925 the only house in Hu-chow, China, not raided by the soldier-brigands was that of Fathers M'Ardle and Conway. A statue of the Little Flower surmounted the doorway. In 1926 the central seminary of Tatung-shansi, China, was for three months in the line of fire between the Provincial army and the Konoming army, which had wrought such havoc upon the churches of Mongolia. Father Daems, the Rector, begged St. Thérèse to see that the seminary was not touched, that not one of the inmates, some 300 in number, was harmed, and that their situation would at least be tolerable. All these requests were fully granted, though the danger from the guns on either side was continuous and extreme. "Humanly speaking," wrote the Rector, "escape was quite out of the question, yet though at times she must have been extraordinarily busy, we did escape completely."

But it would take a large volume indeed that would contain all the "Roses" rained down upon her cherished mission lands.

The following conversion reminds one of that of Pranzini whom, when but a child herself, she saved from eternal death almost as the knife of the guillotine fell. These are the Roses she loves most to cast upon earth. The letter is addressed to her sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

In a Condemned Cell

Dehra Dun,
India.
March 26, 1924.

Dear Rev. Mother,—Last September I received a letter from a nun in Poona asking me to pray earnestly to the Little Flower for a unfortunate man, Sergeant Pearson, who in a fit of jealousy had committed a horrible murder. He had been condemned to death, and since he was a Protestant the Sisters and the convent children were most anxious to obtain his conversion. My friend also asked me to write a few lines to the prisoner. I did so, and sent him a copy of *Sœur Thérèse of Lisieux*.

I was quite confident that the Little Flower would accomplish this work of God, as she always does, and a month later there came a most touching letter from Sergeant Pearson, in which he said the Little Flower of Jesus had been for him a beam of light piercing the darkness which surrounded him.

He could not, however, make up his mind to embrace the Catholic religion, and we felt how stubbornly Satan was fighting with Blessed Thérèse to retain his hold of this wayward soul.

She triumphed, however, most gloriously. When all further effort seemed useless before the rooted obstinacy of the condemned man, suddenly, on the very eve of his execution, he asked to be baptised, and the following morning made his First Communion, a few minutes before being put to death.

This conversion made a great impression on all. As for the children who had prayed so hard to obtain it, I will not attempt to describe to you their transports of joy at the thought that yet another soul had been saved by the "Little Flower of Jesus."

I authorise you to publish this statement for her greater glory, in order that confidence in her intercession may increase more and more.

Father Romulus, O.C.

Before concluding this short notice of her interest in missionaries and their work, we will quote the words of Pope Pius XI, spoken to Mgr. O'Gorman, Vicar-Apostolic of Sierra Leone (Africa), in an audience given in July, 1925. After listening to an account of the work in Sierra Leone, His Holiness, rising from his chair and placing his hand on the Bishop's arm, said with emphasis: "I know you have a mission of the most

difficult kind. You cannot succeed but by supernatural means. Invoke the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, but (and his voice became yet more earnest) have recourse also to the 'Little Flower.' I wish I could tell you of the many very remarkable favours," and the Holy Father repeated the words, "*very remarkable*, of which I have been the object through her intercession!"

HER CONQUEST OF AMERICA

HER CONQUEST OF AMERICA

AMONG the lands where the Little Flower is dearly loved the United States of America hold not merely a high, but probably the highest place. From the volumes of her Roses one gleans something of the truth of this statement, but what the writer saw and heard during a lecture tour on the eastern seaboard proved to him that it is in nowise an exaggeration.

In the Cathedral of New York he was told by the administrator that the faithful could not be provided fast enough with candles for her shrine, and that a new altar in her honour would probably be the finest in the church. As far back as 1902 the present Superior-General of the Paulists wrote a sketch of her life, and to-day their church is one of the great American centres of devotion to the Saint. Crossing the East River to Brooklyn, there is the church of St. Peter Claver which, in addition to Sunday services in her honour, is filled to overflowing seven times on one day of each week. It is of interest that its Rector, whose labours among the coloured people she singularly blesses, was the first to say Mass at her birthplace in Alençon during his sojourn as army chaplain in that town.

From the lips of the Prioress of the Brooklyn Carmel came the following story. The humble convent and its garden, situated in the heart of the city, were surrounded by a wall, insufficiently high for a cloistered community. The nuns could not protect themselves from unwanted visitors, yet were too poor to provide a remedy. One day, however, an almost illegible letter reached them from a dying woman, stating that the Little Flower had

appeared to her, and asked her to build a new convent for her Carmelites in Brooklyn. The Prioress replied gratefully, telling the invalid they would pray for her, and when she had recovered she was to call on them and they would talk the matter over. Two or three days later there came a second letter from the invalid, announcing that the Little Flower had again asked her if she would not build the much-needed convent. A second time the Prioress replied that they would await her recovery and thereafter would discuss the affair. Soon there arrived a note scrawled in the handwriting of one who scarcely had strength to hold the pen. There had been a third visit from the Saint, and a third request that the convent would be rebuilt. The sufferer added that death was at hand, and she wished to settle the matter before it was too late. The Prioress wrote that she had done her duty and could rest content, assured her of their prayers, and advised her to think only of preparing for the coming of Our Lord. Very shortly afterwards God called the good woman to Himself. A priest, however, who had attended her on her deathbed, told the story to her sister, and bade the latter examine the letters written to the Carmel. Profoundly impressed, she decided it was God's will she should carry out the wish of the Little Flower; and at the moment of writing, February, 1927, a beautiful convent and a lofty enclosure wall have been completed.

In Hartford St. Thérèse has care of the Italian community, and her shrine is a notable centre of devotion in that very Catholic city. Washington also has its ardent devotees of the Little Flower. Her League there looks after the interests of the Alaskan missionaries. In one of its convents the writer found it necessary to meet certain criticisms levelled good-naturedly at the devotion. "I am not a heretic," said one of the community with a smile, "I have seen the Little Flower." The answer was a rather incredulous look. "Yes," she continued, "I happened to be in Rome on pilgrimage

when she was there with Céline. I thought that the venerable old man who accompanied them was their grandfather. Of course, it was Monsieur Martin. I met them in the churches, in the cars, and elsewhere." On being asked how it was that she so vividly remembered two young French pilgrims, she answered that it was their extraordinary modesty which had impressed her. One thinks of the Fioretti and its story of the sermon by St. Francis and the little Brother. One thinks also of the articles written quite recently on the "true" St. Thérèse by a Spanish Capuchin, a native of Alençon, representing her as a somewhat forward young person, with plenty of faults, articles which gave great pain to her sisters. Because of their vogue and the vogue of their author they were triumphantly refuted by Father Duboscq, Promoter of the Faith in the Cause of Beatification, Rector of the Seminary of Bayeux, and its Vicar-General.

In Philadelphia, as in Hartford, the little Thérèse has under her special care the work among the huge Italian colony, and the work is richly blessed. Strange that in an English-speaking country a young French nun not thirty years dead should be the patroness of the children of Italy, usually so jealous of their homeland saints. But the devotion to her—aided by the presence of her Carmelite Sisters—is widespread through the city. As the train from New York draws near to Philadelphia, the traveller catches sight of a charming little edifice with the inscription in large characters: "Wayside Shrine of the Little Flower." It is doubtful if France itself could offer a parallel example of public recognition of her popularity.

The Cardinal's Story

"I had been for a number of years a Bishop in the Philippines," said Cardinal Dougherty, of Philadelphia, to the writer, in reply to a question concerning the

origin of his devotion to the Little Flower, "and I found I could make little headway against the proselytism prevalent there, unless I built an orphanage and a hospital in the diocese of Jaro. So in 1912 I came back to America for a year in order to raise a hundred thousand dollars. Never having been a parish priest," he added with a twinkle, "but only a professor, I did not know how to beg, and so felt somewhat diffident.

"It happened that a nun teaching in Manila had made me promise to visit her sister, a Carmelite in Philadelphia. I called duly at the Carmel, and while waiting was asked by the portress, who held a large volume in her hand, if I had read the Life of the Little Flower. 'Who is the Little Flower?' I enquired. The good portress, looking shocked at my ignorance, informed me that she was a Carmelite nun who had died in the odour of sanctity some years before.

"'Do not be surprised,' I answered. 'I have been out of the world, on the other side of the globe, for about ten years. You cannot expect me to know all your new Saints.' I bought the book, however, and taking it home began to read the autobiography. It thrilled me, so that I devoured it rapidly and ended by being possessed with a passionate devotion to the dear little Saint. I placed my begging programme under her care, and as if by magic two hundred thousand dollars came pouring in upon me. After a visit of thanksgiving to the Carmel in Lisieux, when I saw Pauline and her sisters, I went back, in 1913, to the Philippines and built my hospital.

"In 1916 I was in Shanghai, in the Jesuit community there, and spoke of the wonderful book of the Saint, and of my visit to Lisieux. A Chinese priest slipped quietly out of the room, and, returning presently, gave me a copy of the book in Chinese. It was his own translation. A fortnight later a similar incident happened in the Jesuit community in Tokio, when a Japanese Father stole out of the room, and on his return presented me

with his Japanese version of the autobiography. Later, when in Arabia, I was presented with a copy of it in Arabic. I had no idea the devotion to her was so world-wide. I may add that I have sent those translations to the Carmel of Philadelphia."

Replying to a further question His Eminence told the story of what had occurred to Bishop M'Closkey, of the Philippines. The narrative is from the Bishop's own lips. Visiting the Carmel of Lisieux he passed through the sacristy where, behind a beautiful wrought-iron screen, are kept the more precious souvenirs of the Saint, such as the long tresses of her hair, her habit and First Communion dress, her instruments of penance, the miraculous palm found in the coffin in 1910, and other articles of interest. A Carmelite nun standing before the grille explained to him the various objects. It was pleasant to listen to her account, but he came away puzzled at the presence there of a Carmelite outside of her enclosure. Later in the day he referred to the matter when speaking to the Prioress, Mother Agnes of Jesus. The Prioress assured him that not one of her community had quitted the enclosure that day. The Bishop stoutly insisted that he had seen a Carmelite in the sacristy.

"Would your Lordship kindly describe the person you saw?" said Mother Agnes. The Bishop gave her a full description of the nun. "My Lord," she replied, "the one who did you the honour of explaining the souvenirs in the sacristy was none other than Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus herself."

The Rose of Philadelphia

On the day following the Little Flower's canonisation she rewarded one of her clients in Philadelphia by the gift of a rosebud under the following circumstances, all carefully verified.

Mrs. Stuart lived at 2420 Lombard Street in that

city, together with her husband and her daughters, Mary and Esther. The clergy of St. Patrick's bear witness that for over twenty years she had been a patient martyr to suffering, and that five years prior to her death a fall downstairs had grievously complicated matters. Possessing an ardent devotion to St. Thérèse, Mrs. Stuart joined in the novena to the Little Flower which preceded the canonisation on May 17, 1925. When the morning of the great day arrived, the invalid struggled out to the six o'clock Mass in St. Patrick's Church. Having gone a little distance, she stood waiting for a car, but after a couple of minutes she collapsed in the arms of a man who also was waiting there. He learned her address before she became unconscious, whereupon a bystander went off to inform the family. Esther hurried to meet her mother, whom she found being carried home on a passing truck. Mary, who was a night-worker, was immediately sent for. The doctor pronounced it a case of stroke, and said that nothing could be done. Father Murphy, who had just finished Mass at St. Patrick's, anointed the dying woman. Having asked for a sign that she understood him, he saw her lift the crucifix, bless herself and kiss it. This was the only movement she made before her death, which occurred at 10.45 a.m.

"When I realised that my mother was dead," writes her daughter Mary, "I knelt down and asked God to give me a sign that she was in Heaven. I begged Him to let me dream of her or of the Little Flower. That night the perfume of roses was perceived in the house, but we knew nothing of this until later. On Monday morning, May 18, I was making ready to accompany the undertaker when I heard a neighbour enter, then presently there came a piercing scream and Esther called me by name. For some moments I did not dare to move, but finally, gathering all my courage, I went downstairs, to find my sister on her knees beside her mother.

"'Esther,' I cried, 'what on earth is the matter?' 'Little Thérèse is here in the room,' she answered. 'Do you not smell the roses?' I thought it was but her imagination, so I went

close to her, when I also felt a most wonderful scent of roses. It was like a gust of wind, so powerful was it, and it lasted about half a minute.

" That night, about eleven o'clock, as my father and I were describing to a relative what had happened, suddenly, for the space of a minute, the perfume of the roses came again to my father and myself. It was as strong as if a whole bushel of roses had fallen on the floor.

" Esther had been working in the kitchen all evening, preparing our mourning dresses, so I went to tell her of the new favour from the Little Flower. When I had finished, she said to me: ' See what I have just found in the drawer of the sewing-machine.' She showed me a little rosebud, fresh as if newly plucked from a rose-bush. As soon as I saw it I exclaimed: ' Well, that is my sign.' Then a feeling like a wave of happiness swept over me, and I can say that I never in my life experienced such joy.

" Hardly knowing what I did, I took the rosebud and ran into our neighbour's house. Only twice in fourteen years, once at a birth and once at a death, had I crossed the threshold. ' Look,' I said, ' here is a rose from Heaven.' Then I told her of the perfumes. In her turn she informed me that on Sunday night, when the Rosary was being recited in our house, she felt a perfume of flowers around the body of my mother stronger than ever she had felt in all her life, so much so that she looked everywhere to see if anyone had sent flowers.

" The rosebud was for some time carried about in paper, but later we placed it in a watchcase so that it could be seen without being handled. Four months after, on September 17, 1925, I took it to a friend, not a Catholic, in order that she might show it to one of her neighbours. That night, about eleven o'clock, my friend suddenly said to me: ' Mary, do you know there is a face on this rose?' ' No,' I replied, ' but it would not surprise me.' Indeed, nothing would have surprised me in connection with the rosebud. Examining it closely, I saw quite clearly on one of the petals the figure of a little head and on another that of a sorrowful face."

To complete the narrative of Miss Stuart it may be added here, on the authority of the clergy of St. Patrick's, that the rosebud has been submitted to three experts, each of whom decided it was certainly a rose, but one of an entirely unknown variety; that over a hundred thousand people, many of whom were Protestants,

flocked to the house in Lombard Street; that its inmates, though not blessed with this world's goods, invariably refused to accept the smallest coin from their visitors, and assuredly—as the writer can himself bear witness—the advent of the rose and its pilgrims has not lessened their spirit of simplicity; that the rose is frequently taken to the sick, sometimes with most happy results; and that the whole incident has contributed largely to the fame of the "little Queen" in Philadelphia.

The writer desires to add that more than a year after its appearance the rose still remained fresh, and that both the exquisitely beautiful face of the child and the profile of the man in agony are beyond all doubt woven in the texture of the flower itself. Our readers will, of course, remember that the full name in religion of the new "Queen of the Roses" was Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face.

To enumerate her American shrines one would need to give a list of all the cities, most of the towns, and many of the villages of the United States. Last June there passed away the editress of the first American magazine in her honour—*The Little Flower Circle*, a publication begun voluntarily to help the poor Carmelites of Grand Rapids brutally exiled from their original Mexican home. *The Circle* has done much to make the Little Queen known. Perhaps the most notable of the many who have used their pen for this purpose is the author of *The High Romance*, now the editor of the *Commonweal*. In that autobiography and elsewhere Mr. Williams has told graphically how the prayers of the Carmelites of Santa Clara, in California, and the story of the Little Flower brought him back to the faith of his boyhood. In those days there were in the archdiocese of San Francisco odorous pinewoods. Thither he had gone to seek health for the body and found life for his soul. To-day they belong to the new diocese of Monterey-Fresno, which has for its patroness, by special

favour of Pius XI, St. Thérèse. The granting of this unique privilege forms a story by itself.

The White Rose of Monterey

This new diocese of Monterey and Fresno (California) will soon have the honour of possessing the first Cathedral in the world dedicated to the little Saint of Lisieux. Its Bishop, Mgr. M. Ginley, has a marked devotion towards the Little Flower which she has not failed to reward. During a pilgrimage to Lisieux at the time of the July celebrations he related the two following incidents:

"Finding myself one day in a pressing difficulty, I turned to St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, asking her to come to my aid. Immediately thereafter, having finished the prayer, I returned to my office, and what was my surprise to see upon my desk a beautiful white rose, placed there as a token of encouragement by my gracious advocate. I have never been able to discover any other explanation of the mysterious flower. This gracious act of kindness touched me deeply, and my confidence in her was not deceived.

"On my arrival, therefore, in Rome for the canonisation, I asked the Sacred Congregation for the privilege of dedicating my diocese to the new Saint. 'That is not the custom,' I was told. 'We cannot grant the concession.'

"I then remembered the many fruitless attempts Thérèse had made to obtain entrance into the Carmel at the age of fifteen, and how, having silence imposed on her at the very moment when she was about to present her petition to the Pope, she had the good sense to follow the advice of Céline, who whispered to her to speak. 'I also,' I said to myself, 'I also will speak to the Sovereign Pontiff.'

"His Holiness listened with sympathy to my appeal, but hesitated at first to create a precedent. 'We will think it over,' concluded Pius XI kindly. And some days later, before my departure from Rome, he sent me by letter the desired authorisation."

Fresno is one of the youngest of the great cities of the West, and soon the Cathedral to be erected in her honour

will rise within its boundaries, near the orange groves of the San Joaquin plain, and the jagged crests of the Sierra Nevada, and the wonderful Yosemite valley. Monterey is ancient, if Fresno is new. It is one of the seven Spanish missions which dot like pearls the Californian coast, and it was a Carmelite friar, Juan de la Ascension, who first offered the Holy Sacrifice there in 1602. Half a dozen miles away lies what has been called "the loveliest spot in all God's green world," and he christened it Carmelo. Thither came in 1770 another friar, who bears the best-beloved name throughout that western land, Fray Junipero Serra. He made Carmelo the mother-house of all his missions. Since the Little Flower became St. Thérèse, a group of the daughters of Carmel at Santa Clara have followed the trail of the old Spanish padres to this exquisite "garden," and the Little Queen has her special shrine at Carmel-by-the-Sea. Thanks to a friend in Washington, and to the Saint who so frequently brings together those working in her interests, the writer met last summer the distinguished author and convert of the Little Flower already referred to, and also her ardent client, the Chancellor of Monterey.

Other American Roses

After the Carmelite nuns in Boston, the Jesuits of that city are the chief promoters of the cult of St. Thérèse.

On the eve of the canonisation, during the closing Benediction of the novena at the Carmel, a Miss Manning was suddenly cured. An attack of laryngitis had deprived her of her speech since the previous October, and specialist after specialist had been consulted in vain.

In the course of the novena at the Sacred Heart Church in East Cambridge, which preceded September 30, 1925, the cure took place of a cripple child of ten, who for nine years had suffered from infantile paralysis,

and had passed through the hands of innumerable doctors. Both these cures served the purpose of bringing the Little Flower to the notice of the Catholic and non-Catholic citizens of Boston and the neighbourhood.

Another striking case concerning Miss Alice Toomey, New Bedford, Massachusetts, is unusually well authenticated. Miss Toomey had met with an accident to her right foot in April, 1917, the X-rays showing that two bones were broken. The foot became useless, and remained so till September 30, 1925, during which long period Miss Toomey had consulted no fewer than twenty-three doctors. On September 30, which was the ninth day of a novena she was making, Miss Toomey was taken to the church of St. Laurence to visit the shrine of St. Thérèse. During her visit a relic of the Saint was placed on her foot. The foot was cured and she was able to walk home—a distance of nearly a mile—without the aid of stick or crutch. Within a few days an examination by two doctors, as well as an X-ray photograph, showed that the foot was once more normal.

During the gigantic Congress in Chicago, June, 1926, there were over 90,000 Communions in the church of the Calced Carmelites in that city, and more than twice that number flocked to visit the sanctuary of the Little Flower within its walls. One of the writer's vivid recollections is that of a Tuesday spent at her Chicago shrine, where, with the faithful crowding the altar steps, he spoke at each of the five services which have to be given weekly to content her countless clients.

In one of the many beautiful convents of which Dubuque, Iowa, can boast, the writer learned once more how small this world can be, when after a lecture he discovered that one of the audience was a cousin, by marriage, of the "little Queen," and another was the very near relative of a Benedictine nun who had taught "little Thérèse" at Lisieux.

In Saint Paul, Minnesota, the instantaneous cure of a young woman afflicted with chronic arthritis of the left

knee, vouched for by the administrator of the Cathedral, and occurring during the canonisation novena, added considerably to the devotion already existing. In Detroit that devotion is a marvellous thing. Its centre is the Cathedral itself, where during the same novena 22,000 Communions out of the 180,000 received in the city were administered in SS. Peter and Paul's. Moreover, nine services daily were found to be insufficient and a tenth had to be given at nine o'clock in the evening. The number of petitions sent to the Cathedral reached the amazing total of 91,000.

A letter from Florissant, Missouri, the historic home of Father de Smedt, S.J., now St. Stanislaus' Seminary for the novices and scholastics of the Society of Jesus, informs us that in the Jesuit church of St. Francis Xavier, St. Louis, the number of petitions sent for the novena in May last reached a total of 4,314, while 184 favours were gratefully acknowledged.

Canada and the Little Flower

As was to be expected, "New France" took St. Thérèse long ago to her heart, and we have overwhelming evidence of the fact in the huge petition for the Beatification already referred to. Western Canada vies with the East in its devotion to the Saint. Everywhere her picture or statue is to be found in the homes and churches. The well-known French Catholic writer, François Veuillot, confirms this statement:

"Cardinal Touchet," he tells us, "spoke truly when, in his discourse at Lisieux, he asserted that the Little Flower had the dimensions of a great cedar, and spread her health-giving shade over the wide world. When in Canada I do not think I entered a single church without finding there the statue of the Saint surrounded with lights and with roses. A parish priest of the vast Canadian prairie near the Rocky Mountains informed me that she had healed a schism which had torn his parish in two, and that now pilgrims come thither from all the province to seek her intercession."

In Montreal the writer of these lines saw and heard something of the extraordinary veneration in which she is held by the inhabitants. Mention might be made of the parish of St. Edward, where every Monday the relic is exposed, and where, not infrequently, from seven to eight thousand people take part in the services. Its pastor declares that the devotion is rewarded by an abundant outpouring of grace.

Writing in the *Idéal* last July, Père Coubé lends strength to the testimony of François Veuillot. "If in 1897," says the distinguished orator, "anyone had said in New York that a poor little French Carmelite just dead would in a few years have her statue in all the churches of America, he would certainly have been taxed with ignorance of the most elementary psychology. Yet the prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter.

"Canada, which to me seems to be the most religious country in the world, could not help but love the Flower of France. In 1925 I saw there the most touching demonstrations in her honour, and I have often been asked to preach upon her in Montreal and Quebec. The cult continues to grow and her shrines to multiply, not only in Catholic Quebec, but also in the far cities of the West. Quite recently 5,000 pilgrims made their way to Wakaw, eighty miles from Saskatoon, in the wide prairies of the Saskatchewan, to pray to the Saint at one of her shrines. A Benedictine preached the panegyric in the open air. Numerous pilgrims came all the way from Edmonton and from distant towns in Manitoba, travelling all the night by motor-car in order to be able to approach Holy Communion."

Many are the cures which might be quoted as proofs of the affection of St. Thérèse for her Canadian clients. In preference to these, the reader is presented with a Rose by which more than one life was saved, and a beloved home preserved from destruction.

"FIRE! FIRE!"

SAINT-DENIS-DE-KAMOURASKA,
March 25, 1926.

DEAR REV. MOTHER,—It is with feelings of lively emotion that I send to-day our most grateful thanks to the Carmel of

Lisieux. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus protected us in a most visible way on the evening of January 14 last, when a fire broke out in one of the principal rooms of our house—an old house of wood.

At Christmas we had set up in the drawing-room a rustic grotto, in which there lay a tiny Babe of Bethlehem, resting upon straw in a tiny manger. In front of it we placed an altar, and on this, to our great honour, the three Christmas Masses were said. Afterwards a lamp was placed on the altar, which burned all day before the crib.

On January 14, about five o'clock in the evening, there was no one in the drawing-room, and my sister Elodie, who happened to be on the upper floor, heard a voice, calm but very earnest, say: "Fire! Fire!"

She immediately came downstairs, where she was joined by another of my sisters, and both were horrified to find the drawing-room on fire. A spark from the lamp may have fallen on the inflammable material all around, or the heat may have broken the lamp itself—the real cause we never knew.

As soon as she reached the foot of the stairs Elodie saw the first small flames spreading to the straw and the fir branches, but before she had time to seize a cloak and beat out the flames, the great fir tree which formed the background of the altar had become a furnace, throwing out sparks in all directions, on furniture, hangings, and tapestried partitions. Soon the whole room was in flames, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that my sister managed to get out, badly burned and half suffocated. She had, however, the presence of mind to close the door, and enough strength to make her way round to the verandah, where she could watch, through the window, the progress of the disaster.

All this time we were crying in a spirit of the utmost confidence: "Little St. Thérèse, please work a miracle! Save us!" Even as we were calling, suddenly, in a moment the fire abated, confining itself to the corner where it started, so that when our neighbours arrived they had only to throw a few buckets of water to put it out.

All who saw the damage the fire had done in those few minutes agreed in saying that only the intervention of Heaven could have made it die down as it did.

As for my sisters and myself, we know that St. Thérèse, fulfilling her promise, "came down" to us that day, first of all warning Elodie by the mysterious voice, when no one had any suspicion of the catastrophe; and, secondly, delivering us from a fearful death.

That is why we wish to give public thanks to our beloved protectress.

A French Canadian Family.

The Curé of Saint-Denis-de-la-Bouteillerie, the Rev. Joseph Dumais, their parish priest, who saw the scene of the fire the following day, states:

"Having examined the drawing-room, and taken note of the capricious action of the fire in its attempts to penetrate to the adjoining rooms, I have no hesitation in attributing the preservation of the house and its inmates to the intervention of her to whom they appealed for help."

A Rose from Brazil

Reference has already been made to the extraordinary veneration in which St. Thérèse is held throughout Brazil. Owing largely to the initiative of Father Rubillon, S.J., a devoted apostle of "Theresinha," as the Brazilians call her, that country had the honour of providing by a national subscription the magnificent casket in which lie the major portion of the relics of the Saint.

The following is one of the most striking of the favours with which she has rewarded her countless lovers in that distant land. It shows how delicately the hunter of souls deals with both sinner and saint. The present narrative, drawn up by the wife of the deputy whom the Little Flower converted, was forwarded to Lisieux by the wife of the Brazilian ambassador at The Hague; but a full account appeared in *O Globo*, an important Brazilian journal, in its issue of October 14, 1925.

"My brother-in-law, Bernardino Augusto de Lima, a brilliant lawyer and a man of exceptional virtue, beloved by everyone, was the friend of all the poor and downtrodden in Bello Horizonte. On the other hand, my husband, though deeply attached to him, had for over fifty years abandoned all religion. A distinguished deputy in Rio de Janeiro, a poet, an academician, he was likewise an utter sceptic.

" Bernardino was suffering from cancer in the stomach, and in 1924 matters became so serious that it was necessary to warn my husband. The blow proved a terrible one. At all costs the invalid must be saved. Having so often heard in our home of the miracles Theresinha was working all around, he sought her intercession. Bernardino had no thought of being cured, but offered his agony for the conversion of his brother. So effectively did the martyr pray to the little Queen that on May 13, 1924, my husband accompanied me to Holy Communion. My tears of joy flowed fast at the altar. Word was sent to Bello Horizonte, but Bernardino had already been informed of the conversion by his patroness herself. My husband continued his prayers in Rio, and one day he secretly asked the little Saint with unusual earnestness to give a sign of her presence in the sick-room, the token to be rose-petals.

" Just then a strange incident occurred in his brother's house. Though a very devout person, my sister-in-law knew nothing of the life of St. Thérèse, and indeed the thought of the Saint never crossed her mind. One night, about eleven o'clock, before retiring, she placed a cup of boiled water on the table of the dining-room for the use of her sick husband. She was the last to retire, and the first to rise. Going about five o'clock in the morning to the dining-room, she lifted the saucer which she had placed over the cup, and to her surprise—and indignation —saw three magnificent rose-petals floating on the water. No one could give an explanation of their presence there, so that, puzzled and annoyed, she boiled the water a second time. Next morning the same occurrence, followed by another indignant outburst, since the water was meant for the invalid, and the same protestations of innocence from all the household. Besides, there was not a rose in the house at the time.

" On the third day four petals were found floating on the surface, as fresh as if newly plucked. My sister-in-law, now quite startled but still without thought of any supernatural intervention, decided to speak to the patient about the matter and showed him the mysterious rose-leaves. ' It is indeed a miracle,' he remarked, ' but not for me.' Clearly Thérèse had revealed to him his brother's ardent prayer. Somewhat later his brother arrived at Bello Horizonte, and, to the great emotion of his hearers, made known his secret request. ' I asked Theresinha to send me rose-petals that I could see, so that I should be convinced of her care for Bernardino.'

" From that time the vomiting, the frightful pains, the suffocation, all the concomitant evils of cancer disappeared, and to the astonishment of the doctors the patient recovered his

appetite. More than once he said to his child as she gave him to drink, 'I know it is you who are there, my little one, but it is Theresinha I see in your place.' The last moments were spent in an ecstasy, and on May 18, 1924, he died the death of the just. The night before he had announced: 'To-morrow at eight o'clock Theresinha will come to fetch me. She awaits me with a great retinue of angels and virgins in order to lead me to eternal bliss.'"

The Suicide

The following narrative, forwarded by Father Rubillon, S.J., to the Carmel of Lisieux, was drawn up by Father Granier, S.J., of Rio de Janeiro. Father Granier had been summoned to the hospital by Dr. Bento, a devout Catholic, to attend a case of attempted suicide. One of the foremost financiers of Rio de Janeiro, finding himself on the brink of ruin, and maddened by the reproaches of his worldly-minded wife, had resolved to put an end to himself. He had no religion whatsoever, and had not as much as made his First Communion.

"'One evening,' he told me, 'I took my revolver and fired two shots into my head. Hearing a noise in the house, I knew that someone had gone for help, and I thought that when they found me still alive, and even standing on my feet, they would despise me, believing I had not the courage to kill myself. Not being able to endure the thought I took my revolver again, and, standing before a mirror, fired two other shots into the wound already open in my head. . . .

"'When I regained consciousness I found myself here in the hospital of São Geraldo, where Providence was awaiting me. I was furious with the doctors and nurses and tried to prevent them doing anything to the wound. They thought I had lost my reason, but my mind was perfectly clear.

"'Meanwhile Dr. Bento came on the scene. "You wretched creature!" he said. "What have you done? The father of a family attempting to take his own life! I know what is wrong with you. Religion is what you require. I am going to ask a priest to come to you, for you have great need of Confession." I could not resist this man, who had told me what no one had ever dared to tell me before.

"'It was then, Father, that they sent for you.'

"When I arrived, I found one of his relatives there before me, trying to prepare him for confession. She was armed with a relic of St. Thérèse, to whom she had an ardent devotion.

"To my great surprise I discovered that even in those few short moments our Saint had worked a profound change in his soul. I had no difficulty. The way to the heart of this poor wanderer was opened wide.

"He made his confession in the most straightforward fashion and with wonderful contrition; then, with great fervour, he received his First Communion.

"All this took a little time. When we had finished, and the doctors were again in attendance, it was found that the man was now practically out of danger. A little while before they had given him only a couple of hours to live.

"In the morning I again brought him Holy Communion.

"'Do you know, Father,' he said, greeting me with visible emotion, 'that I have been talking all the night with St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus?' This man in agony, who had not closed his eyes for one minute during the night, was happier and more peaceful than he had ever been in his life before.

"'Ah!' he said, 'what a joy it is to be forgiven! I am completely changed. I suffer, it is true, but I richly deserve it. How happy I am!'

"It was most extraordinary to hear a man talk of being happy who still had three bullets in his head (for as yet they had only succeeded in extracting one), and for this would-be suicide to speak of passing the night in conversation with a Saint.

"Dr. Bento was beside himself. He insisted that only a miracle, physical as well as moral, could explain the state of this man, called back, one might almost say, from the dead. Some days later, having succeeded in extracting a second bullet, he said: 'My dear friend, there will never again be a case like yours. To have had two bullets taken from your brain, and to be neither paralysed, nor blind, nor the victim of any dangerous disease, is beyond belief.' Two further operations were necessary to remove the last two bullets. They were long and difficult, but the patient bore them without chloroform, or any other anæsthetic, 'as a penance for his sins.' He never winced or moaned, but joked to encourage the doctor.

"Full of gratitude to her who has given him back health of soul as well as of body, he is now quite recovered, and has but one further desire—to bring his wife back to God."

PRAYERS OF SAINT THERÈSE, THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS. NOVENA AND MASS PRAYERS

HER ACT OF OBLATION

"Offering of Myself as a Victim to God's Merciful Love"

(*This Prayer was found after the death of Saint Thérèse in the copy of the Gospels which she carried night and day close to her heart.*)

O my God, O Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to love Thee and to make Thee loved—to labour for the glory of Thy Church by saving souls here upon earth and by delivering those suffering in Purgatory. I desire to fulfil perfectly Thy will, and to reach the degree of glory Thou hast prepared for me in Thy kingdom. In a word, I wish to be holy, but, knowing how helpless I am, I beseech Thee, my God, to be Thyself my holiness.

Since Thou hast loved me so much as to give me Thy Only-Begotten Son to be my Saviour and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine. I offer them gladly to Thee, and I beg of Thee to look on me through the eyes of Jesus, and in His Heart aflame with love. Moreover, I offer Thee all the merits of the Saints in Heaven and on earth, together with their acts of love, and those of the holy Angels. Lastly, I offer Thee, O Blessed Trinity, the love and the merits of the Blessed Virgin, my dearest Mother—to her I commit this oblation, praying her to present it to Thee.

During the days of His life on earth her divine Son, my sweet Spouse, spoke these words: "*If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you.*"[1] Therefore I am certain Thou wilt grant my prayer. O my God, I know that the more Thou wishest to bestow, the more Thou dost make us desire. In my heart I feel boundless desires, and I confidently beseech Thee to take possession of my soul. I

[1] John xvi. 23.

cannot receive Thee in Holy Communion as often as I should wish; but art Thou not all-powerful? Abide in me as Thou dost in the tabernacle—never abandon Thy little victim. I long to console Thee for ungrateful sinners, and I implore Thee to take from me all liberty to cause Thee displeasure. If through weakness I should chance to fall, may a glance from Thine eyes straightway cleanse my soul, and consume all my imperfections—as fire transforms all things into itself.

I thank Thee, O my God, for all the graces Thou hast granted me, especially for having purified me in the crucible of suffering. At the day of judgement I shall gaze with joy upon Thee, carrying Thy sceptre of the cross. And since Thou hast deigned to give me this precious cross as my portion, I hope to be like unto Thee in Paradise and to behold the sacred wounds of Thy Passion shine on my glorified body.

After earth's exile I hope to possess Thee eternally, but I do not seek to lay up treasures in Heaven. I wish to labour for Thy love alone—with the sole aim of pleasing Thee, of consoling Thy Sacred Heart, and of saving souls who will love Thee through eternity.

When the evening of life comes, I shall stand before Thee with empty hands, because I do not ask Thee, my God, to take account of my works. All our good deeds are blemished in Thine eyes. I wish therefore to be robed with Thine own justice, and to receive from Thy love the everlasting gift of Thyself. I desire no other throne, no other crown but Thee, O my Beloved!

In Thy sight time is naught—"*one day is a thousand years.*"[1] Thou canst in a single instant prepare me to appear before Thee.

* * * * *

In order that my life may be one act of perfect love, *I offer myself as a holocaust to Thy Merciful Love*, imploring Thee to consume me unceasingly, and to allow the floods of infinite tenderness gathered up in Thee to overflow into my soul, that so I may become a martyr of Thy love, O my God! May this martyrdom one day release me from my earthly prison, after having prepared me to appear before Thee, and may my soul take its flight—without delay—into the eternal embrace of Thy Merciful Love!

* * * * *

[1] Ps. xxxix. 4

O my Beloved, I desire at every beat of my heart to renew this oblation an infinite number of times, "*till the shadows retire*,"[1] and everlastingly I can tell Thee my love face to face.

Marie-Françoise-Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus et de la Sainte Face.

(*Mary Frances Teresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face.*)

This ninth day of June,
Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity,
In the year of grace, 1895.

A Morning Offering

(*The original manuscript is preserved at Carfin*)

O my God! I offer Thee all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to its infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of its merciful love.

O my God! I ask of Thee for myself and for those whom I hold dear the grace to fulfil perfectly Thy holy will, to accept for love of Thee the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in Heaven for all eternity. Amen.

[1] Cant. iv. 6.

AN ACT OF CONSECRATION
TO THE
HOLY FACE

Written for the Novices

O adorable Face of Jesus, since Thou hast deigned to make special choice of our souls, in order to give Thyself to them, we come to consecrate these souls to Thee. We seem, O Jesus, to hear Thee say: "*Open to Me, my sisters, My spouses, for My face is wet with the dew, and My locks with the drops of the night.*"[1] Our souls understand Thy language of love; we desire to wipe Thy sweet Face, and to console Thee for the contempt of the wicked. In their eyes Thou art still "*as it were hidden . . . they esteem Thee an object of reproach.*"[2]

O blessed Face, more lovely than the lilies and the roses of the spring, Thou art not hidden from us. The tears which dim Thine eyes are as precious pearls which we delight to gather, and, through their infinite value, to purchase the souls of our brethren.

From Thy adorable lips we have heard Thy loving plaint: "*I thirst.*" We know that this thirst which consumes Thee is a thirst for love, and to quench it we would wish to possess an infinite love.

Dear Spouse of our souls, if we could love with the love of all hearts, that love would be Thine. . . . Give us, O Lord, this love! Then come to thy spouses and satisfy Thy thirst.

And give to us souls, dear Lord. . . . We thirst for souls! —above all, for the souls of apostles and martyrs . . . that through them we may inflame all poor sinners with love of Thee.

O adorable Face, we shall succeed in winning this grace from Thee! Unmindful of our exile, "*by the rivers of Babylon*," we will sing in Thine ears the sweetest of melodies. Since Thou art the one true home of our souls, *our songs*

[1] Cf. Cant. v. 2.

[2] Cf. Isa. liii. 3.

shall not be sung in a strange land.[1] O beloved Face of Jesus, while we await the eternal day when we shall gaze upon Thine infinite glory, our only desire is to delight Thy divine eyes by keeping our faces hidden too, so that no one on earth may recognise us. . . . Dear Jesus, Heaven for us is Thy hidden Face!

VARIOUS PRAYERS

"*If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you.*"—JOHN xvi. 23.

O Eternal Father, Thy only Son, the dear Child Jesus, is mine since Thou hast given Him to me. I offer Thee the infinite merits of His divine childhood, and I beseech Thee in His name to open the gates of Heaven to a countless host of little ones who will for ever follow this divine Lamb.

> "*Just as the King's image is a talisman through which anything may be purchased in his Kingdom, so through My Adorable Face—that priceless coin of My Humanity—you will obtain all you desire.*"
>
> Our Lord to Sister Mary of St. Peter.[2]

Eternal Father, since Thou hast given me for my inheritance the adorable Face of Thy divine Son, I offer that Face to Thee, and I beg Thee, in exchange for this *coin* of infinite value, to forget the ingratitude of those souls who are consecrated to Thee, and to pardon all poor sinners.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY CHILD

O little Jesus, my only treasure, I abandon myself to every one of Thine adorable whims. I seek no other joy than that of making Thee smile. Grant me the graces and the virtues of Thy holy childhood, so that on the day of my birth into Heaven the angels and saints may recognise in Thy little spouse: *Thérèse of the Child Jesus.*

PRAYER TO THE HOLY FACE

O adorable Face of Jesus, sole beauty which ravisheth my heart, vouchsafe to impress on my soul Thy divine likeness, so that it may not be possible for Thee to look at Thy spouse

[1] Cf. Ps. cxxxvi. 4.

[2] Sister Mary of St. Peter entered the Carmel of Tours in 1840. Three years later she had the first of a series of revelations concerning devotion to the Holy Face as a means of reparation for blasphemy. See *Life of Léon Papin-Dupont*, known as "The Holy Man of Tours."

without beholding Thyself. O my Beloved, for love of Thee I am content not to see here on earth the sweetness of Thy glance, nor to feel the ineffable kiss of Thy sacred lips, but I beg of Thee to inflame me with Thy love, so that it may consume me quickly, and that soon *Thérèse of the Holy Face* may behold Thy glorious countenance in Heaven.

Prayer

Inspired by the sight of a statue of Saint Joan of Arc

O Lord God of Hosts, who hast said in Thy Gospel, "*I am not come to bring peace but a sword*,"[1] arm me for the combat. I burn to do battle for Thy glory, but I pray Thee to enliven my courage. . . . Then with holy David I shall be able to exclaim: "*Thou alone art my shield; it is Thou, O Lord, who teachest my hands to fight.*"[2]

O my Beloved, I know the warfare in which I am to engage; it is not on the open field I shall fight. . . . I am a prisoner held captive by Thy love; of my own free will I have riveted the fetters which bind me to Thee, and cut me off for ever from the world. My sword is Love! with it—like Joan of Arc—"I will drive the strangers from the land, and I will have Thee proclaimed King"—over the kingdom of souls.

It is true Thou hast no need of so weak an instrument as I, but Joan, Thy chaste and valiant Spouse, has said: "We must do battle before God gives the victory." I will do battle, then, O Jesus, for Thy love, until the evening of my life. As Thou didst not will to enjoy rest upon earth, I wish to follow Thy example; and then this promise which came from Thy sacred lips will be fulfilled in me: "*If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there also shall My servant be, and . . . him will My Father honour.*"[3] To be with Thee, to be in Thee, that is my one desire, and Thy assurance of its fulfilment helps me to bear with my exile as I wait the joyous eternal day when I shall see Thee face to face.

[1] Matt. x. 34. [2] Cf. Ps. cxliii. 1, 2. [3] John xii. 26.

PRAYER

TO OBTAIN HUMILITY

Written for a Novice

O Jesus, when Thou wast a wayfarer upon earth, Thou didst say: "*Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.*"[1] O almighty King of Heaven! my soul indeed finds rest in seeing Thee condescend to wash the feet of Thy apostles—"*having taken the form of a slave.*"[2] I recall the words Thou didst utter to teach me the practice of humility: "*I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. The servant is not greater than his Lord. . . . If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them.*"[3] I understand, dear Lord, these words which come from Thy meek and humble heart, and I wish to put them in practice with the help of Thy grace.

I desire to humble myself in all sincerity, and to submit my will to that of my Sisters, without ever contradicting them, and without questioning whether they have the right to command. No one, O my Beloved! had that right over Thee, and yet Thou didst obey not only the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, but even Thy executioners. And now, in the Holy Eucharist, I see Thee complete Thy self-abasement. O divine King of Glory, with wondrous humility Thou dost submit Thyself to all Thy priests, without any distinction between those who love Thee and those who, alas! are lukewarm or cold in Thy service. They may advance or delay the hour of the Holy Sacrifice: Thou art always ready to come down from Heaven at their call.

O my Beloved, under the white Eucharistic veil Thou dost indeed appear to me meek and humble of heart! To teach me humility, Thou canst not further abase Thyself, and so I wish to respond to Thy love, by putting myself in the lowest place, by sharing Thy humiliations, so that I may "*have part with Thee*"[4] in the Kingdom of Heaven.

[1] Matt. xi. 29.
[2] Phil. ii. 7.
[3] John xiii. 15-17.
[4] Cf. John xiii. 8.

I implore Thee, dear Jesus, to send me a humiliation whensoever I try to set myself above others. Thou knowest my weakness. Each morning I resolve to be humble, and in the evening I recognise that I have often been guilty of pride. The sight of these faults tempts me to discouragement; yet I know that discouragement is itself but a form of pride. I wish, therefore, O my God, to build all my trust upon Thee. As Thou canst do all things, deign to implant in my soul this virtue which I desire, and to obtain it from Thy infinite mercy, I will often say to Thee: "*Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine.*"

Prayer to the Little Flower

From the Novena to St. Thérèse

O Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who during thy short life on earth became a mirror of angelic purity, of love strong as death, and of wholehearted abandonment to God, now that thou rejoicest in the reward of thy virtues, cast a glance of pity on me as I leave all things in thy hands. Make my troubles thine own—speak a word for me to our Lady Immaculate, whose *flower* of special love thou wert—to that Queen of Heaven "*who smiled on thee at the dawn of life.*" Beg her as Queen of the Heart of Jesus to obtain for me by her powerful intercession the grace I yearn for so ardently at this moment, and that she join with it a blessing that may strengthen me during life, defend me at the hour of death, and lead me straight on to a happy eternity. *Amen.*

Prayer

O God, who didst inflame with Thy spirit of love the soul of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, grant that we also may love Thee, and may make Thee much loved. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer of St. Thérèse.
100 *days' ind. Cardinal Bourne.*

FROM THE MASS OF ST. THÉRÈSE

ORATIO

Dómine, qui dixisti: Nisi efficiámini sicut párvuli, non intrábitis in regnum caelórum: da nobis, quaesumus; ita sanctae Terésiae Virginis in humilitáte et simplicitáte cordis vestigia sectári, ut praemia consequámur aetérna: Qui vivis et regnas.

PRAYER

O Lord, who hast said, "Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven," grant us, we beseech Thee, so to follow in the footsteps of the Virgin, St. Thérèse, in humility and simplicity of heart, that we may attain to our eternal reward.

SECRETA

Sacrificium nostrum tibi, Dómine, quaesumus, sanctae Terésiae Virginis tuae precátio sancta conciliet: ut, in cujus honóre sollémniter exhibétur, ejus méritis efficiátur accéptum. Per Dóminum nostrum.

SECRET

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the holy prayers of Thy Virgin, St. Thérèse, may render our sacrifice agreeable unto Thee; so that it may be accepted through the merits of her in whose honour it is solemnly celebrated.

POSTCOMMUNIO

Illo nos, Dómine, amóris igne caeléste mystérium inflámmet: quo sancta Terésia Virgo tua se tibi pro hominibus caritátis victimam devóvit. Per Dóminum nostrum.

POSTCOMMUNION

May Thy heavenly Mysteries inflame us, O Lord, with that same fire of love with which Thy Virgin, St. Thérèse, delivered herself up to Thee as a victim of love for men.

Concordat cum originali approbato. In fidem, etc.
E Secretaria Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis, die 17 Maji 1925.
L.✠S. ALEXANDER VERDE, *Secretarius.*

LAUS DEO PER TERESULAM

APPEAL

FOR THE

Basilica of the Little White Flower at Lisieux

"Gratitude," says the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux in his appeal for a votive church in honour of St. Thérèse, "has an irresistible need of expressing itself visibly and perpetually in stone." All over the earth such sanctuaries are rising, or are being projected—from Carfin in Scotland to San Francisco in the West. In Rome itself the Holy Father has cordially blessed "the holy and providential undertaking" of the erection of a church and seminary for missionary priests under her powerful patronage and his own direct jurisdiction. The Carmel of the Little Flower is assisting this scheme so dear to the heart of the "little sister of the missionaries," and is accepting offerings for that intention.

But more than anywhere is the construction of a great sanctuary in her honour needful and appropriate in Lisieux itself.

In 1923 the Masses offered in the present chapel numbered 2,900, in 1925 over 6,000, while the Communions mounted from 35,000 to 76,000. The confusion is inextricable when a large pilgrimage arrives, brought by several special trains. It often happens that pilgrims from a distance, even from the ends of the earth, are utterly unable to satisfy their legitimate devotion. One must also think of the spiritual needs of the Carmelites, to whom the chapel belongs, and who must have their spiritual exercises. A sanctuary in Lisieux is, therefore, a necessity.

Ground is available adjoining the Carmel. The prayers of its saintly inmates, including the three sisters of "the little Queen," the prayers of the pilgrims, a share in a monthly Mass in the convent—these are some of the rewards held out to all who will help in the building of the Basilica of St. Thérèse, the Little Flower of Jesus.

T. N. T.